



OLIVER GOLDSMITH

WITH AN
INTRODUCTION
BY
H.W. GARROD



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INTRODUCTION

THE quality of Goldsmith's fame is attested by its successful resistance to two classes of mischief—the calculated impertinence of the prigs—such men, that is, as Boswell and Macaulay, and the miscalculated kindness of the sentimentalists—chief among them Thackeray. The prigs, perhaps, do not greatly matter here, as everywhere, their art is self-defeating. The sentimentalists are a more serious trouble, since it is no part of virtue to show hardness towards natures which have none of it nor could sustain it. Yet a humane criticism may so far, perhaps, assert itself against Thackeray, and the tribe of rhapsodists, as to recall that Goldsmith is primarily important as a *writer*. In the profession of a writer he achieved success after failing in almost every other profession known to man—medicine, law, the Church, keeping school, keeping shop, play-acting, flute-playing, begging. Of his adventures in these many callings the record is uncertain, and he himself attached no exaggerated value to them as sources of experience giving reality to his writing. He had begged, or fluted, his way across Europe, but it had taught him that “we see more of the world by travel, and more of human nature by remaining at home” * The crosses of his early years he took, it is likely, more in his proper character—the character, that is, of the “good-natured man”—than the popular accounts of him would have us to believe.

The reactions of this character upon political and

* *Present State of Polite Learning*, ch. xii.

literary circumstances are at least as interesting as the vicissitudes of Goldsmith's personal fortune. He was born in 1728. A new king had just reconfirmed Walpole in that long lease of political power to which Goldsmith liked to trace the decline of English letters. He died in 1774. The same year witnessed the accession of Louis XVI to the throne of France, and the year following the beginning of the American War of Independence. These synchronisms have their significance for the study of a poet who touches greatness in two poems expressly composed to convey the truths of political economy. That the greatness of *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* is not given by their economics is easily said. Yet *The Traveller* at least is not properly placed if these are forgotten. It was begun just before this country became involved with France in the Seven Years' War, and it was finished in the months following Wilkes's attack on the King in No. 45 of the *North Briton*. The latter portion of it might be described as the reflections of a Good-natured Man overtaken by the first-mutter of the storm of Human Freedom. The piece owes something to Addison's *Letter from Italy*. Both poets had begged their way across Europe, but that the ornate beggary of a pension from Lord Halifax had taught Addison anything, or had rendered him either acute or just in his observation, nothing in his poem indicates. He came back with what he took out—his pension, and the comfortable Whiggish conviction that Great Britain was the natural and exclusive home of Freedom and Good Government. Only so far as this conviction has truth or nature is there anything of either in his poem. Goldsmith brought home the poverty in which he started out, but the kingdoms of the world and their want of glory had persuaded him that government, good or bad, contributes little or nothing to man's happiness. Those parts of life, or of the heart, which "kings or laws" can materially affect are few. The grandeur of the human soul consists in its good-nature,

and those states are best governed of which the citizens are sufficiently good-natured to put up with what they are given

The Traveller, especially the concluding portion, should be read side by side with a poem which consciously imitates parts of it—the *Descriptive Sketches* of Wordsworth. When the reader has made the comparison, he should make another equally instructive. He should read Goldsmith's essay *On the Distresses of a Common Soldier* (*Essays*, xxiv), with its companion piece, *On the Distresses of the Poor* (*Citizen of the World*, cxix), and these two pieces he should compare with the delineation of the same distresses furnished by Wordsworth's *Female Vagrant*. The strength of Goldsmith is his humour, of Wordsworth his want of it. Both made the mistake of supposing that the rest of the world were like themselves. The more serious mistake was that of Goldsmith, for if there is a real distinction between good and bad, it is probably nowhere so obvious as in the case of "kings and laws." Men are serious in demanding justice, and it is silly to tell them not to mind. Souls gifted with that humorous Stoicism which makes Goldsmith, as a man and as a writer, so attractive are comparatively rare, and humourless souls with red revolution in them at least a good deal commoner than Goldsmith believed. In one particular Goldsmith erred grievously—it did not occur to him that men who are good-natured enough to forgo their own rights can be fanatical in their assertion of the rights of others.

Accordingly in *The Traveller*, and in a less degree in *The Deserted Village*, the reader must be as easy-going as Goldsmith himself not to be sensible of a certain intellectual incompetence. Social and economic conditions were moving in the direction of a change greater than any since the break-up of the Middle Ages; and to the self-imposed study of these altering conditions Goldsmith brought inaccurate observation and trivial com-

ment—the same faults, in fact, as made him, in the circle of Dr Johnson, a disputant almost contemptible. In the exercise, on the other hand, of the arts of feeling and memory (each of which has its proper genius) he abounds in grace and truth—virtues which communicate themselves even to his diction. His was not a crusading nature, but he waged a humorous and effective war against the dominant fear of the “low” in incident, sentiment, and speech. “It were to be wished,” he writes,* “that we no longer found pleasure with the inflated style that has for some years been looked upon as fine writing, and which every young writer is now obliged to adopt if he chooses to be read. We should now dispense with loaded epithet and dressing up trifles with dignity. Let us, instead of writing finely, try to write naturally.” That in verse Goldsmith is always as good as his principles, that *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village* are everywhere free from conventional diction, it would be rash to affirm. But they have at least a purer and truer diction than the rest of the poetry of their day. Of his prose style, the praise may be set a good deal higher. Goldsmith was a born writer, writing upon any subject well and easily. Boswell, it is true, has alleged that he consciously imitated Johnson, but the two styles are, in fact, essentially opposed, and what Goldsmith says of “dressing up trifles with dignity” hits Johnson hard. In the qualities required for the profession of a *general writer*, Johnson was not well endowed, Goldsmith has all of them in perfection. “Goldsmith,” says Johnson himself, with splendid justice, “was a man who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do.” He essayed nothing, perhaps, which required the highest powers, but in the kind of writing which he undertook he had an easy competence, a style in perfect adjustment with temperament.

* *Present State of Polite Learning*, ch. x.

This volume contains, along with the poems of Goldsmith, his plays, and certainly they are not a negligible part of his achievement. He has himself analyzed for us the faults of the fashionable comedy of the time. "The Comic Muse, long sick," was "a-dying." She was dying of her own "gentility," of her fussy fear of the "low," of her addiction to "sentimentals." These were, in a great degree, infections of literature as a whole, and it is the grand merit of all Goldsmith's writings (a merit best illustrated, perhaps, by the *Vicar of Wakefield*) to be clean of all of them. To dispel them from contemporary comedy, however, was a business requiring a high quality of faith. Goldsmith speaks of himself as coming to Comedy "strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age." His most valuable prepossession was, in fact, one which he shares with all considerable dramatists. It is probable that he had picked up in his *Wanderyahre* some first-hand acquaintance with stage practice, but his greatest asset was his masculine conviction that what the theatre wishes is in tragedy to be made to cry, and in comedy to be made to laugh. "On my conscience," he writes, "I believe we have all forgot to laugh in these days." Outside Goldsmith and Sheridan the eighteenth century can show no comedy at which a man could conceivably laugh. It was not done, and it was not easy to persuade people that it should be done. *The Good-Natured Man* is not among the best English comedies, but it at least gave Goldsmith the chance of developing a character which he understood thoroughly, and it furnished his public with a reasonable excuse for permitting themselves to be amused. "Uncommonly low," said the *London Chronicle* the next morning. But Goldsmith had made his public laugh, and before they had time to relapse into gentility and "sentimentals," he gave them, in *She Stoops to Conquer*, one of the masterpieces of the English stage. The plot involves a ludicrous experience of his own youth, when he, upon one occasion mistook

the house of a gentleman in Ardagh for an inn. Nothing is so good for the world as that now and again some one should break in on its gentilities, command its best cheer, and rouse it to something of catholic inn-keeping quality.

Let us not forget, however, that Goldsmith belongs after all not to the Inn (any more than to the City or the Club), but to the fields. There his treasure and his heart is. He had laid up his treasure in the long years of his vagabondage, and his most characteristic effects, those effects in which he illustrates most movingly our common nature, proceed from the pieties of youthful memory. His true spiritual riches are the poverty of his youth, and his best skill, to illumine tenderly for each of us the deserted village of the heart, its broken roads, and unfinished purposes.

H W GARROD

THE TRAVELLER

POEMS AND PLAYS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

THE TRAVELLER :

OR, A PROSPECT OF SOCIETY

(1764)

To the REV HENRY GOLDSMITH

DEAR SIR,—I am sensible that the friendship between us can acquire no new force from the ceremonies of a Dedication ; and perhaps it demands an excuse thus to prefix your name to my attempts, which you decline giving with your own. But as a part of this Poem was formerly written to you from Switzerland, the whole can now, with propriety, be only inscribed to you. It will also throw a light upon many parts of it when the reader understands that it is addressed to a man who, despising fame and fortune, has retired early to happiness and obscurity, with an income of forty pounds a year.

I now perceive, my dear brother, the wisdom of your humble choice. You have entered upon a sacred office, where the harvest is great and the labourers are but few ; while you have left the field of ambition, where the labourers are many, and the harvest not worth carrying away. But of all kinds of ambition, what from the refinement of the times, from different systems of

criticism, and from the divisions of party, that which pursues poetical fame is the wildest

Poetry makes a principal amusement among unpolished nations, but in a country verging to the extremes of refinement, Painting and Music come in for a share. As these offer the feeble mind a less laborious entertainment, they at first rival Poetry, and at length supplant her, they engross all that favour once shown to her, and though but younger sisters, seize upon the elder's birthright

Yet, however this art may be neglected by the powerful, it is still in great danger from the mistaken efforts of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapests, and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it, and as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say, for error is ever talkative

But there is an enemy to this art still more dangerous—I mean party. Party entirely distorts the judgment and destroys the taste. When the mind is once infected with this disease, it can only find pleasure in what contributes to increase the distemper. Like the tiger, that seldom desists from pursuing man after having once preyed upon human flesh, the reader who has once gratified his appetite with calumny, makes ever after the most agreeable feast upon murdered reputation. Such readers generally admire some half-witted thing, who wants to be thought a bold man, having lost the character of a wise one. Him they dignify with the name of poet: his tawdry lampoons are called satires, his turbulence is said to be force, and his frenzy fire.

What reception a poem may find, which has neither abuse, party, nor blank verse to support it, I cannot tell, nor am I solicitous to know. My aims are right. Without espousing the cause of any party, I have attempted to moderate the rage of all. I have endeavoured to

show that there may be equal happiness in states that are differently governed from our own, that each state has a particular principle of happiness, and that this principle in each may be carried to a mischievous excess. There are few can judge better than yourself how far these positions are illustrated in this Poem —
I am, dear sir, your most affectionate brother,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

REMOTE, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
Or by the lazy Sceld or wandering Po,
Or onward, where the rude Carinthian boor
Against the houseless stranger shuts the door,
Or where Campania's plain forsaken lies,
A weary waste expanding to the skies,
Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee,
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain
Eternal blessings crown my earliest friend,
And round his dwelling guardian saints attend.
Blest be that spot where cheerful guests retire
To pause from toil, and trim their evening fire.
Blest that abode where want and pain repair,
And every stranger finds a ready chair
Blest be those feasts, with simple plenty crowned,
Where all the ruddy family around
Laugh at the jests or pranks that never fail,
Or sigh with pity at some mournful tale,
Or press the bashful stranger to his food,
And learn the luxury of doing good
But me, not destined such delights to share,
My prime of life in wandering spent and care,
Impelled, with steps unceasing, to pursue
Some fleeting good, that mocks me with the view,
That, like the circle bounding earth and skies,
Allures from far, yet, as I follow, flies,

My fortune leads to traverse realms alone,
And find no spot of all the world my own

E'en now, where Alpine solitudes ascend,
I sit me down a pensive hour to spend,
And placed on high above the storm's career,
Look downward where an hundred realms appear,
Lakes, forests, cities, plains extending wide,
The pomp of kings, the shepherd's humbler pride

When thus Creation's charms around combine,
Amidst the store, should thankless pride repine?
Say, should the philosophic mind disdain

That good which makes each humbler bosom vain?
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,
These little things are great to little man,
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind
Exults in all the good of all mankind

Ye glittering towns, with wealth and splendour crowned,
Ye fields, where summer spreads profusion round,
Ye lakes, whose vessels catch the busy gale,
Ye bending swains, that dress the flowery vale,
For me your tributary stores combine
Creation's heir, the world, the world is mine

As some lone miser, visiting his store,
Bends at his treasure, counts, recounts it o'er,
Hoards after hoards his rising raptures fill,
Yet still he sighs, for hoards are wanting still
Thus to my breast alternate passions rise,
Pleased with each good that Heaven to man supplies,
Yet oft a sigh prevails, and sorrows fall,
To see the hoard of human bliss so small,
And oft I wish amidst the scene to find
Some spot to real happiness consigned,
Where my worn soul, each wandering hope at rest,
May gather bliss to see my fellows blest

But where to find that happiest spot below
Who can direct, when all pretend to know?
The shudd'ring tenant of the frigid zone
Boldly proclaims that happiest spot his own,

Extols the treasures of his stormy seas,
And his long nights of revelry and ease
The naked negro, panting at the line,
Boasts of his golden sands and palmy wine,
Basks in the glare, or stems the tepid wave,
And thanks his gods for all the good they gave
Such is the patriot's boast where'er we roam ,
His first, best country ever is at home
And yet, perhaps, if countries we compare,
And estimate the blessings which they share,
Though patriots flatter, still shall wisdom find
An equal portion dealt to all mankind ,
As different good, by art or nature given,
To different nations makes their blessing even

Nature, a mother kind alike to all,
Still grants her bliss at labour's earnest call
With food as well the peasant is supplied
On Idra's cliffs as Arno's shelvy side ,
And though the rocky-crested summits frown,
These rocks by custom turn to beds of down
From art more various are the blessings sent ,
Wealth, commerce, honour, liberty, content
Yet these each other's power so strong contest,
That either seems destructive of the rest
Where wealth and freedom reign, contentment fails ,
And honour sinks where commerce long prevails
Hence every state, to one loved blessing prone,
Conforms and models life to that alone,
Each to the fav'rite happiness attends,
And spurns the plan that aims at other ends :
Till carried to excess in each domain,
This fav'rite good begets peculiar pain

But let us try these truths with closer eyes,
And trace them through the prospect as it lies
Here for a while my proper cares resigned,
Here let me sit in sorrow for mankind ,
Like yon neglected shrub at random cast,
That shades the steep, and sighs at every blast

Far to the right, where Apennine ascends,
Bright as the summer, Italy extends
Its uplands sloping deck the mountain's side,
Woods over woods in gay theatric pride,
While oft some temple's mould'ring tops between
With venerable grandeur mark the scene

Could Nature's bounty satisfy the breast,
The sons of Italy were surely blest
Whatever fruits in different climes were found,
That proudly rise, or humbly court the ground,
Whatever blooms in torrid tracts appear,
Whose bright succession decks the varied year,
Whatever sweets salute the northern sky
With vernal lives, that blossom but to die,
These, here disporting, own the kindred soil,
Nor ask luxuriance from the planter's toil,
While sea-born gales their gelid wings expand
To winnow fragrance round the smiling land

But small the bliss that sense alone bestows,
And sensual bliss is all the nation knows
In florid beauty groves and fields appear,
Man seems the only growth that dwindles here
Contrasted faults through all his manners reign
Though poor, luxurious, though submissive, vain,
Though grave, yet trifling, zealous, yet untrue,
And e'en in penance planning sins anew
All evils here contaminate the mind
That opulence departed leaves behind,
For wealth was theirs, not far removed the date
When commerce proudly flourished through the state
At her command the palace learnt to rise,
Again the long-fall'n column sought the skies,
The canvas glowed, beyond e'en nature warm,
The pregnant quarry teemed with human form,
Till, more unsteady than the southern gale,
Commerce on other shores displayed her sail,
While nought remained of all that riches gave,
But towns unmanned, and lords without a slave,

And late the nation found with fruitless skill
Its former strength was but plethoric ill

Yet still the loss of wealth is here supplied
By arts, the splendid wrecks of former pride ,
From these the feeble heart and long-fall'n mind
An easy compensation seem to find
Here may be seen, in bloodless pomp arrayed,
The paste-board triumph and the cavalcade,
Processions formed for piety and love,
A mistress or a saint in every grove
By sports like these are all their cares beguiled ,
The sports of children satisfy the child
Each nobler aim, repress by long control,
Now sinks at last, or feebly mans the soul ,
While low delights succeeding fast behind,
In happier meanness occupy the mind
As in those domes where Cæsars once bore sway,
Defaced by time and tott'ring in decay,
There, in the ruin, heedless of the dead,
The shelter-seeking peasant builds his shed ,
And, wondering man could want the larger pile,
Exults, and owns his cottage with a smile

My soul, turn from them, turn we to survey
Where rougher climes a nobler race display ,
Where the bleak Swiss their stormy mansion tread,
And force a churlish soil for scanty bread
No product here the barren hills afford,
But man and steel, the soldier and his sword
No vernal blooms their torpid rocks array,
But winter lingering chills the lap of May :
No zephyr fondly sues the mountain's breast,
But meteors glare, and stormy glooms invest

Yet, still, e'en here content can spread a charm,
Redress the clime, and all its rage disarm
Though poor the peasant's hut, his feasts though small.
He sees his little lot the lot of all ,
Sees no contiguous palace rear its head
To shame the meanness of his humble shed ,

No costly lord the sumptuous banquet deal
To make him loathe his vegetable meal ,
But calm, and bred in ignorance and toil,
Each wish contracting fits him to the soil
Cheerful at morn he wakes from short repose,
Breasts the keen air, and carols as he goes ,
With patient angle trolls the finny deep ,
Or drives his vent'rous ploughshare to the steep ,
Or seeks the den where snow-tracks mark the way,
And drags the struggling savage into day
At night returning, every labour sped,
He sits him down the monarch of a shed ,
Smiles by his cheerful fire, and round surveys
His children's looks, that brighten at the blaze ,
While his loved partner, boastful of her hoard,
Displays her cleanly platter on the board
And haply too some pilgrim, thither led,
With many a tale repays the nightly bed

Thus every good his native wilds impart,
Imprints the patriot passion on his heart ,
And e'en those ills that round his mansion rise
Enhance the bliss his scanty fund supplies
Dear is that shed to which his soul conforms,
And dear that hill which lifts him to the storms ,
And as a child, when scaring sounds molest,
Clings close and closer to the mother's breast,
So the loud torrent and the whirlwind's roar
But bind him to his native mountains more

Such are the charms to barren states assigned ;
Their wants but few, their wishes all confined
Yet let them only share the praises due
If few their wants, their pleasures are but few ,
For every want that stimulates the breast
Becomes a source of pleasure when redrest ,
Whence from such lands each pleasing science flies
That first excites desire, and then supplies ,
Unknown to them, when sensual pleasures cloy ,
To fill the languid pause with finer joy ,

Unknown those powers that raise the soul to flame,
Catch every nerve, and vibrate through the frame
Their level life is but a smouldering fire,
Unquenched by want, unfanned by strong desire ;
Unfit for raptures, or, if raptures cheer
On some high festival of once a year,
In wild excess the vulgar breast takes fire,
Till, buried in debauch, the bliss expire

But not their joys alone thus coarsely flow
Their morals, like their pleasures, are but low ,
For, as refinement stops, from sire to son
Unaltered, unimproved the manners run,
And love's and friendship's finely pointed dart
Fall blunted from each indurated heart
Some sterner virtues o'er the mountain's breast
May sit, like falcons cowering on the nest ,
But all the gentler morals, such as play
Through life's more cultured walks, and charm the way,
These, far dispersed, on timorous pinions fly,
To sport and flutter in a kinder sky

To kinder skies, where gentler manners reign,
I turn , and France displays her bright domain
Gay, sprightly land of mirth and social ease,
Pleased with thyself, whom all the world can please,
How often have I led thy sportive choir,
With tuneless pipe, beside the murmuring Loire ?
Where shading elms along the margin grew,
And freshened from the wave the zephyr flew ,
And haply, though my harsh touch, falt'ring still,
But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill,
Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
And dance, forgetful of the noon-tide hour
Alike all ages Dames of ancient days
Have led their children through the mirthful maze,
And the gay grandsire, skilled in gestic lore,
Has frisked beneath the burthen of threescore

So blest a life these thoughtless realms display ;
Thus idly busy rolls their world away ,

Theirs are those arts that mind to mind endear,
For honour forms the social temper here
Honour, that praise which real merit gains,
Or e'en imaginary worth obtains,
Here passes current paid from hand to hand,
It shifts in splendid traffic round the land,
From courts to camps, to cottages, it strays,
And all are taught an avarice of praise
They please, are pleased, they give to get esteem,
Till, seeming blest, they grow to what they seem

But while this softer art their bliss supplies,
It gives their follies also room to rise,
For praise too dearly loved, or warmly sought,
Enfeebles all internal strength of thought,
And the weak soul within itself unblest,
Leans for all pleasure on another's breast
Hence ostentation here, with tawdry art,
Pants for the vulgar praise which fools impart,
Here vanity assumes her pert grimace,
And trims her robes of frieze with copper lace,
Here beggar pride defrauds her daily cheer,
To boast one splendid banquet once a year,
The mind still turns where shifting fashion draws,
Nor weighs the solid worth of self-applause.

To men of other minds my fancy flies,
Embosomed in the deep where Holland lies
Methinks her patient sons before me stand,
Where the broad ocean leans against the land,
And, sedulous to stop the coming tide,
Lift the tall rampire's artificial pride.
Onward methinks, and diligently slow,
The firm connected bulwark seems to grow;
Spreads its long arms amidst the watery roar,
Scoops out an empire, and usurps the shore
While the pent ocean, rising o'er the pile,
Sees an amphibious world beneath him smile:
The slow canal, the yellow-blossomed vale,
The willow-tufted bank, the gliding sail,—

The crowded mart, the cultivated plain,—
A new creation rescued from his reign

Thus, while around the wave-subjected soil
Impels the native to repeated toil,
Industrious habits in each bosom reign,
And industry begets a love of gain
Hence all the good from opulence that springs,
With all those ills superfluous treasure brings,
Are here displayed Their much-loved wealth imparts
Convenience, plenty, elegance, and arts
But view them closer, craft and fraud appear ,
E'en liberty itself is bartered here
At gold's superior charms all freedom flies ,
The needy sell it, and the rich man buys ,
A land of tyrants, and a den of slaves,
Here wretches seek dishonourable graves,
And calmly bent, to servitude conform,
Dull as their lakes that slumber in the storm

Heavens ! how unlike their Belgic sires of old !
Rough, poor, content, ungovernably bold ;
War in each breast, and freedom on each brow
How much unlike the sons of Britain now !

Fired at the sound, my genius spreads her wing,
And flies where Britain courts the western spring ,
Where lawns extend that scorn Arcadian pride,
And brighter streams than famed Hydaspes glide
There all around the gentlest breezes stray ,
There gentle music melts on every spray ,
Creation's mildest charms are there combined,
Extremes are only in the master's mind !
Stern o'er each bosom Reason holds her state,
With daring aims irregularly great ,
Pride in their port, defiance in their eye,
I see the lords of human kind pass by ,
Intent on high designs, a thoughtful band,
By forms unfashioned fresh from Nature's hand,
Fierce in their native hardness of soul,
True to imagined right, above control,

While e'en the peasant boasts these rights to scan,
And learns to venerate himself as man

Thine, Freedom, thine the blessings pictured here,
Thine are those charms that dazzle and endear
Too blest indeed, were such without alloy !
But fostered e'en by Freedom ills annoy
That independence Britons prize too high
Keeps man from man, and breaks the social tie,
The self-dependent lordlings stand alone,
All claims that bind and sweeten life unknown
Here, by the bonds of nature feebly held,
Minds combat minds, repelling and repelled,
Ferments arise, imprisoned factions roar,
Repress ambition struggles round her shore,
Till, over-wrought, the general system feels,
Its motions stop, or frenzy fire the wheels

Nor this the worst As nature's ties decay,
As duty, love, and honour fail to sway,
Fictitious bonds, the bonds of wealth and law,
Still gather strength, and force unwilling awe
Hence all obedience bows to these alone,
And talent sinks, and merit weeps unknown
Till time may come, when, stript of all her charms,
The land of scholars and the nurse of arms,
Where noble stems transmit the patriot flame,
Where kings have toiled and poets wrote for fame,
One sink of level avarice shall lie,
And scholars, soldiers, kings, unhonoured die

Yet think not, thus when Freedom's ills I state,
I mean to flatter kings, or court the great
Ye powers of truth, that bid my soul aspire,
Far from my bosom drive the low desire
And thou, fair Freedom, taught alike to feel
The rabble's rage and tyrant's angry steel,
Thou transitory flower, alike undone
By proud contempt or favour's fostering sun,
Still may thy blooms the changeful clime endure !
I only would repress them, to secure

For just experience tells, in every soil,
That those who think must govern those that toil ,
And all that Freedom's highest aims can reach
Is but to lay proportioned loads on each
Hence, should one order disproportioned grow,
Its double weight must ruin all below

O then how blind to all that truth requires,
Who think it freedom when a part aspires !
Calm is my soul, nor apt to rise in arms,
Except when fast approaching danger warms ,
But when contending chiefs blockade the throne,
Contracting regal power to stretch their own,
When I behold a factious band agree
To call it freedom when themselves are free,
Each wanton judge new penal statutes draw,
Laws grind the poor, and rich men rule the law,
The wealth of climes where savage nations roam
Pillaged from slaves to purchase slaves at home,
Fear, pity, justice, indignation start,
Tear off reserve, and bare my swelling heart ,
Till half a patriot, half a coward grown,
I fly from petty tyrants to the throne

Yes, brother, curse with me that baleful hour
When first ambition struck at regal power ,
And thus polluting honour in its source,
Gave wealth to sway the mind with double force
Have we not seen, round Britain's peopled shore,
Her useful sons exchanged for useless ore ?
Seen all her triumphs but destruction haste,
Like flaring tapers brightening as they waste ?
Seen opulence, her grandeur to maintain,
Lead stern depopulation in her train,
And over fields where scattered hamlets rose
In barren solitary pomp repose ?
Have we not seen at pleasure's lordly call
The smiling long-frequented village fall ?
Beheld the duteous son, the sire decayed,
The modest matron, and the blushing maid,

Forced from their homes, a melancholy train,
To traverse climes beyond the western main,
Where wild Oswego spreads her swamps around,
And Niagara stuns with thundering sound ?

Even now, perhaps, as there some pilgrim strays
Through tangled forests and through dangerous ways,
Where beasts with man divided empire claim,
And the brown Indian marks with murderous aim,
There, while above the giddy tempest flies,
And all around distressful yells arise,
The pensive exile, bending with his woe,
To stop too fearful, and too faint to go,
Casts a long look where England's glories shine,
And bids his bosom sympathize with mine

Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose,
To seek a good each government bestows ?
In every government, though terrors reign,
Though tyrant kings or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure !
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy
The lifted axe, the agonizing wheel,
Luke's iron crown, and Damien's bed of steel,
To men remote from power but rarely known,
Leave reason, faith, and conscience all our own

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

(1770)

To SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS

DEAR SIR,—I can have no expectations, in an address of this kind, either to add to your reputation or to establish my own. You can gain nothing from my admiration, as I am ignorant of that art in which you are said to excel, and I may lose much by the severity of your judgment, as few have a juster taste in poetry than you. Setting interest therefore aside, to which I never paid much attention, I must be indulged at present in following my affections. The only dedication I ever made was to my brother, because I loved him better than most other men. He is since dead. Permit me to inscribe this poem to you.

How far you may be pleased with the versification and mere mechanical parts of this attempt, I do not pretend to inquire, but I know you will object (and indeed several of our best and wisest friends concur in the opinion) that the depopulation it deplores is nowhere to be seen, and the disorders it laments are only to be found in the poet's own imagination. To this I can scarcely make any other answer than that I sincerely believe what I have written, that I have taken all possible pains, in my country excursions, for these four or five years past, to be certain of what I allege, and that all my views and inquiries have led me to believe those

miseries real which I here attempt to display But this is not the place to enter into an inquiry, whether the country be depopulating or not, the discussion would take up much room, and I should prove myself, at best, an indifferent politician, to tire the reader with a long preface, when I want his unfatigued attention to a long poem

In regretting the depopulation of the country, I inveigh against the increase of our luxuries, and here also I expect the shout of modern politicians against me For twenty or thirty years past it has been the fashion to consider luxury as one of the greatest national advantages, and all the wisdom of antiquity in that particular as erroneous Still, however, I must remain a professed ancient on that head, and continue to think those luxuries prejudicial to states by which so many vices are introduced, and so many kingdoms have been undone Indeed, so much has been poured out of late on the other side of the question that, merely for the sake of novelty and variety, one would sometimes wish to be in the right—I am, dear sir, your sincere friend, and ardent admirer,

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

SWEET AUBURN ! loveliest village of the plain ,
Where health and plenty cheered the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene !
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made !

How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed,
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired,
The dancing pair that simply sought renown,
By holding out, to tire each other down,
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place,
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled

Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges, works its weedy way,
Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow-sounding bittern guards its nest,
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries,
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall,
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay

Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade ,
A breath can make them, as a breath has made
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man ,
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more
His best companions, innocence and health ,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth

But times are altered , trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land and dispossess the swain ,
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green ,
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more

Sweet Auburn ! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,
Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain

In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs—and God has given my share—
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down ,
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,

Around my fire an evening group to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw,
And, as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return—and die at home at last

O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine,
How happy he who crowns in shades like these
A youth of labour with an age of ease,
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly !
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep,
Nor surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate,
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend,
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While Resignation gently slopes the way,
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past !

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below,
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind,—
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made
But now the sounds of population fail,
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.

All but yon widowed solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn ,
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild ,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year ,
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change, his place ,
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ,
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise
His house was known to all the vagrant train ,
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast ,
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed ,
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,
Wept o'er his wounds or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe ,
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to virtue's side ;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all ,

And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way

Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul,
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accents whispered praise.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place,
Truth from his lips prevail'd with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran,
E'en children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile
His ready smile a parent's warmth express'd,
Their welfare pleas'd him, and their cares distress'd.
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfacted glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he,
Full well the busy whisper circling round
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned

Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault,
The village all declared how much he knew
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too,
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill;
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still,
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around,
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew

But past is all his fame The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door,
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose,
The hearth, except when winter chilled the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay,
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row

Vain transitory splendours ! could not all
Reprive the tottering mansion from its fall ?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care ,

No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the woodman's ballad shall prevail,
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear,
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round,
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train,
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art,
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first-born sway,
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed,—
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain,
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay,
'Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore,
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around
Yet count our gains This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same
Not so the loss The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied,
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth,

His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies,
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall

As some fair female unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slight every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes,
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, solicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed
In Nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprise,
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms—a garden and a grave

Where then, ah ! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride ?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied

If to the city sped—what waits him there ?
To see profusion that he must not share ;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind,
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade,
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way

The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here richly decked admits the gorgeous train
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy !
Sure these denote one universal joy !
Are these thy serious thoughts ?—Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distressed ,
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn ,
Now lost to all , her friends, her virtue fled,
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinched with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour,
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown

Do thine, sweet Auburn,—thine, the loveliest train,—
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain ?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread !

Ah, no ! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe
Far different there from all that charmed before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore ;
Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day ,
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling ,
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around,
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake,
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they ,

While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landscape with the skies
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away,
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main,
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new-found worlds, and wept for others' woe,
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kissed her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And clasped them close, in sorrow doubly dear,
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasures only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe,
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round

Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done ,
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there ,
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade ,
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame ,
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride ,
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so ,
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well !
Farewell, and O ! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime ,
Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain ,
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain
Teach him, that states of native strength possess,
Though very poor, may still be very blest ,
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away ,
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

THE HERMIT: A BALLAD

THE HERMIT: A BALLAD

(1766)

THE following letter, addressed to the printer of the *St James's Chronicle*, appeared in that paper in June 1767 —

SIR,—As there is nothing I dislike so much as newspaper controversy, particularly upon trifles, permit me to be as concise as possible in informing a correspondent of yours, that I recommended *Blainville's Travels* because I thought the book was a good one, and I think so still. I said I was told by the bookseller that it was then first published but in that, it seems, I was misinformed, and my reading was not extensive enough to set me right.

Another correspondent of yours accuses me of having taken a ballad I published some time ago from one by the ingenious Mr Percy. I do not think there is any great resemblance between the two pieces in question. If there be any, his ballad is taken from mine. I read it to Mr Percy some years ago, and he (as we both considered these things as trifles at best) told me with his usual good humour, the next time I saw him, that he had taken my plan to form the fragments of Shakespeare into a ballad of his own. He then read me his little Cento, if I may so call it, and I highly approved it. Such petty anecdotes as these are scarce worth printing and, were it not for the busy disposition of some of your correspondents, the public should never have known that he owes me the hint of his ballad, or

that I am obliged to his friendship and learning for communications of a much more important nature —
I am, sir, yours, etc. OLIVER GOLDSMITH

“ TURN, gentle Hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray

‘ For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow,
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening as I go ”

“ Forbear, my son,” the Hermit cries,
“ To tempt the dangerous gloom ,
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom

“ Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still ;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will

“ Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate’er my cell bestows,
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose

“ No flocks that range the valley free
To slaughter I condemn ,
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them

“ But from the mountain’s grassy side
A guiltless feast I bring,
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring

“ Then, pilgrim, turn ; thy cares forego ,
All earth-born cares are wrong :
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long ”

Soft as the dew from heaven descends
His gentle accents fell
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell

Far in a wilderness obscure
The lonely mansion lay,
A refuge to the neighbouring poor
And strangers led astray

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Required a master’s care ,
The wicket, opening with a latch,
Received the harmless pair.

And now, when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The Hermit trimmed his little fire,
And cheered his pensive guest.

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily pressed, and smiled ;
And skilled in legendary lore
The lingering hours beguiled.

Around in sympathetic mirth
Its tricks the kitten tries ,
The cricket chirrups in the hearth ,
The crackling faggot flies

But nothing could a charm impart
To soothe the stranger's woe ,
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow

His rising cares the Hermit spied,
With answering care opprest
" And whence, unhappy youth," he cried,
" The sorrows of thy breast ?

" From better habitations spurned,
Reluctant dost thou rove ?
Or grieve for friendship unreturned,
Or unregarded love ?

" Alas ! the joys that Fortune brings
Are trifling, and decay ,
And those who prize the trifling things
More trifling still than they

" And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep,
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
But leaves the wretch to weep ?

" And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair-one's jest ,
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.

“ For shame, fond youth, thy sorrows hush,
And spurn the sex,” he said :
But, while he spoke, a rising blush
His love-lorn guest betrayed.

Surprised he sees new beauties rise,
Swift mantling to the view ,
Like colours o’er the morning skies,
As bright, as transient too.

The bashful look, the rising breast,
Alternate spread alarms
The lovely stranger stands confest
A maid in all her charms

“ And, ah ! forgive a stranger rude,
A wretch forlorn,” she cried ,
“ Whose feet unhallowed thus intrude
Where heaven and you reside.

“ But let a maid thy pity share,
Whom love has taught to stray ,
Who seeks for rest, but finds despair
Companion of her way

“ My father lived beside the Tyne ,
A wealthy lord was he ;
And all his wealth was marked as mine,—
He had but only me.

“ To win me from his tender arms
Unnumbered suitors came,
Who praised me for imputed charms,
And felt or feigned a flame.

“ Each hour a mercenary crowd
With richest proffers strove ,
Amongst the rest young Edwin bowed,
But never talked of love

“ In humble, simplest habits clad,
No wealth nor power had he ,
Wisdom and worth were all he had,
But these were all to me

“ And when beside me in the dale
He carolled lays of love,
His breath lent fragrance to the gale,
And music to the grove

“ The blossom opening to the day,
The dews of heaven refined,
Could nought of purity display,
To emulate his mind.

“ The dew, the blossom on the tree.
With charms inconstant shine ;
Their charms were his, but, woe to me !
Their constancy was mine.

“ For still I tried each fickle art,
Importunate and vain ,
And while his passion touched my heart,
I triumphed in his pain.

“ Till quite dejected with my scorn
He left me to my pride,
And sought a solitude forlorn,
In secret, where he died.

“ But mine the sorrow, mine the fault,
And well my life shall pay ,
I'll seek the solitude he sought,
And stretch me where he lay.

“ And there forlorn, despairing, hid,
I'll lay me down and die ,
'Twas so for me that Edwin did,
And so for him will I ”

“ Forbid it, Heaven ! ” the Hermit cried,
And clasped her to his breast
The wondering fair one turned to chide,—
'Twas Edwin's self that prest

“ Turn, Angelina, ever dear ;
My charmer, turn to see
Thy own, thy long-lost Edwin here,
Restored to love and thee.

“ Thus let me hold thee to my heart,
And every care resign ·
And shall we never, never part,
My life—my all that's mine ?

“ No, never from this hour to part,
We'll live and love so true,
The sigh that rends thy constant heart
Shall break thy Edwin's too ”

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

THE HAUNCH OF VENISON

A POETICAL EPISTLE TO LORD CLARE

THANKS, my lord, for your venison, for finer or fatter
Never ranged in a forest, or smoked in a platter ,
The haunch was a picture for painters to study,
The fat was so white, and the lean was so ruddy ,
Though my stomach was sharp, I could scarce help
regretting

To spoil such a delicate picture by eating ,
I had thoughts in my chambers to place it in view,
To be shown to my friends as a piece of virtù ,
As in some Irish houses, where things are so-so,
One gammon of bacon hangs up for a show .
But, for eating a rasher of what they take pride in,
They'd as soon think of eating the pan it is fried in.
But hold—let me pause—don't I hear you pronounce
This tale of the bacon a damnable bounce ?

Well, suppose it a bounce—sure a poet may try,
By a bounce now and then, to get courage to fly.
But, my lord, it's no bounce I protest in my turn
It's a truth—and your lordship may ask Mr Byrne.

To go on with my tale : as I gazed on the haunch,
I thought of a friend that was trusty and staunch ;
So I cut it, and sent it to Reynolds undrest,
To paint it, or eat it, just as he liked best
Of the neck and the breast I had next to dispose ,
'Twas a neck and a breast that might rival Monroe's :

But in parting with these I was puzzled again,
With the how, and the who, and the where, and the
when

There's Howard, and Coley, and H—rth, and Hiff,
I think they love venison—I know they love beef,
There's my countryman Higgins—oh ! let him alone,
For making a blunder, or picking a bone
But hang it !—to poets who seldom can eat
Your very good mutton's a very good treat ,
Such dainties to them their health it might hurt,
It's like sending them ruffles, when wanting a shirt
While thus I debated, in reverie centred,

An acquaintance, a friend as he called himself, entered ,
An under-bred, fine-spoken fellow was he,
And he smiled as he looked at the venison and me
“ What have we got here ?—Why this is good eating !
Your own I suppose—or is it in waiting ? ”

“ Why, whose should it be ? ” cried I with a flounce ,
“ I get these things often ”—but that was a bounce
“ Some lords, my acquaintance, that settle the nation,
Are pleased to be kind—but I hate ostentation ”

“ If that be the case then,” cried he, very gay,
“ I'm glad I have taken this house in my way
To-morrow you take a poor dinner with me ,
No words—I insist on't—precisely at three ,
We'll have Johnson, and Burke , all the wits will be
there ,

My acquaintance is slight, or I'd ask my Lord Clare.
And now that I think on't, as I am a sinner !
We wanted this venison to make out the dinner
What say you—a pasty ? It shall, and it must,
And my wife, little Kitty, is famous for crust
Here, porter ! this venison with me to Mile-end ,
No stirring—I beg—my dear friend—my dear friend ! ”
Thus, snatching his hat, he brushed off like the wind,
And the porter and eatables followed behind

Left alone to reflect, having emptied my shelf,
And “ nobody with me at sea but myself , ”

Though I could not help thinking my gentleman hasty,
Yet Johnson, and Burke, and a good venison pasty,
Were things that I never disliked in my life,
Though clogged with a coxcomb, and Kitty his wife.
So next day, in due splendour to make my approach,
I drove to his door in my own hackney-coach

When come to the place where we all were to dine
(A chair-lumbered closet just twelve feet by nine),
My friend bade me welcome, but struck me quite dumb
With tidings that Johnson and Burke would not come :
“ For I knew it,” he cried : “ both eternally fail ;
The one with his speeches, and t’other with Thrale.
But no matter, I’ll warrant we’ll make up the party
With two full as clever, and ten times as hearty
The one is a Scotchman, the other a Jew ,
They’re both of them merry, and authors like you ;
The one writes the ‘ Snarler,’ the other the ‘ Scourge’ ;
Some thinks he writes ‘ Cinna ’—he owns to ‘ Panurge.’ ”
While thus he described them by trade and by name,
They entered, and dinner was served as they came.

At the top a fried liver and bacon were seen ,
At the bottom was tripe, in a swinging tureen ,
At the sides there was spinach and pudding made hot ,
In the middle a place where the pasty—was not
Now, my lord, as for tripe, it’s my utter aversion,
And your bacon I hate like a Turk or a Persian ,
So there I sat stuck, like a horse in a pound,
While the bacon and liver went merrily round
But what vexed me most was that d——d Scottish rogue,
With his long-winded speeches, his smiles, and his brogue,
And, “ Madam,” quoth he, “ may this bit be my poison,
A prettier dinner I never set eyes on ,
Pray a slice of your liver, though may I be curst,
But I’ve eat of your tripe till I’m ready to burst ”
“ The tripe ! ” quoth the Jew, with his chocolate cheek ,
“ I could dine on this tripe seven days in a week .
I like these here dinners so pretty and small ,
But your friend there, the doctor, eats nothing at all ”

" O ! ho ! " quoth my friend, " he'll come on in a trice ;
 He's keeping a corner for something that's nice
 There's a pasty "—" A pasty ! " repeated the Jew ,
 " I don't care if I keep a corner for't too "
 " What the de'il, mon, a pasty ! " re-echoed the Scot ;
 " Though splitting, I'll still keep a corner for that "
 " We'll all keep a corner," the lady cried out ,
 " We'll all keep a corner," was echoed about
 While thus we resolved, and the pasty delayed,
 With looks that quite petrified, entered the maid :
 A visage so sad, and so pale with affright,
 Waked Priam in drawing his curtains by night
 But we quickly found out—for who could mistake her ?—
 That she came with some terrible news from the baker .
 And so it fell out, for that negligent sloven
 Had shut out the pasty on shutting his oven
 Sad Philomel thus—but let similes drop—
 And now that I think on't, the story may stop
 To be plain, my good lord, it's but labour misplaced,
 To send such good verses to one of your taste ,
 You've got an odd something—a kind of discerning,
 A relish, a taste—sickened over by learning ,
 At least, it's your temper, as very well known,
 That you think very slightly of all that's your own
 So, perhaps, in your habits of thinking amiss,
 You may make a mistake, and think slightly of this.

DESCRIPTION OF AN AUTHOR'S BED- CHAMBER

WHERE the Red Lion, flaring o'er the way,
 Invites each passing stranger that can pay,
 Where Calvert's butt and Parson's black champagne
 Regale the drabs and bloods of Drury Lane ,
 There, in a lonely room, from bailiffs snug,
 The Muse found Scroggen stretched beneath a rug

A window, patched with paper, lent a ray,
That dimly showed the state in which he lay ;
The sanded floor that grits beneath the tread ,
The humid wall with paltry pictures spread ,
The royal Game of Goose was there in view,
And the Twelve Rules the royal martyr drew ;
The Seasons, framed with listing, found a place,
And brave Prince William showed his lamp-black face :
The morn was cold, he views with keen desire
The rusty grate unconscious of a fire
With beer and milk arrears the frieze was scored,
And five cracked teacups dressed the chimney board .
A night-cap decked his brows instead of bay ,
A cap by night—a stocking all the day !

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF A MAD DOG

Good people all, of every sort,
Give ear unto my song ,
And if you find it wondrous short,—
It cannot hold you long

In Islington there was a man,
Of whom the world might say,
That still a godly race he ran,—
Whene'er he went to pray

A kind and gentle heart he had,
To comfort friends and foes ,
The naked every day he clad,—
When he put on his clothes.

And in that town a dog was found,
As many dogs there be,
Both mongrel, puppy, whelp, and hound,
And curs of low degree.

This dog and man at first were friends ,
But when a pique began,
The dog, to gain some private ends,
Went mad, and bit the man

Around from all the neighbouring streets
The wondering neighbours ran,
And swore the dog had lost his wits,
To bite so good a man

The wound it seemed both sore and sad
To every Christian eye ,
And while they swore the dog was mad,
They swore the man would die

But soon a wonder came to light,
That showed the rogues they lied ,
The man recovered of the bite,
The dog it was that died

STANZAS ON WOMAN

WHEN lovely Woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy
What art can wash her guilt away ?

The only art her guilt to cover,
To hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is, to die

THE GIFT TO IRIS, IN BOW STREET,
COVENT GARDEN

IMITATED FROM THE FRENCH

SAY, cruel Iris, pretty rake,
Dear mercenary beauty,
What annual offering shall I make
Expressive of my duty ?

My heart, a victim to thine eyes,
Should I at once deliver,
Say, would the angry fair one prize
The gift, who slights the giver ?

A bill, a jewel, watch, or toy,
My rivals give—and let 'em ,
If gems, or gold, impart a joy,
I'll give them—when I get 'em

I'll give—but not the full-blown rose,
Or rose-bud more in fashion ,
Such short-lived offerings but disclose
A transitory passion

I'll give thee something yet unpaid,
Not less sincere than civil :
I'll give thee—ah ! too charming maid,
I'll give thee—to the devil

EPITAPH ON THOMAS PARNELL

THIS tomb, inscribed to gentle Parnell's name,
May speak our gratitude, but not his fame
What heart but feels his sweetly moral lay,
That leads to truth through pleasure's flowery way ?

Celestial themes confessed his tuneful aid ,
 And Heaven, that lent him genius, was repaid.
 Needless to him the tribute we bestow,
 The transitory breath of fame below
 More lasting rapture from his works shall rise,
 While converts thank their poet in the skies.

SONG

THE wretch condemned with life to part
 Still, still on hope relies ,
 And every pang that rends the heart
 Bids expectation rise

Hope, like the gleaming taper's light,
 Adorns and cheers our way ,
 And still, as darker grows the night,
 Emits a brighter ray

AN ELEGY ON THAT GLORY OF HER SEX,
MRS MARY BLAIZE

GOOD people all, with one accord
 Lament for Madam Blaize,
 Who never wanted a good word,
 From those who spoke her praise

The needy seldom passed her door,
 And always found her kind ,
 She freely lent to all the poor,—
 Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighbourhood to please,
 With manners wondrous winning ,
 And never followed wicked ways,—
 Unless when she was sinning

At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumbered in her pew,—
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux and more ;
The king himself has followed her,—
When she has walked before

But now her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all ,
The doctors found, when she was dead,—
Her last disorder mortal

Let us lament, in sorrow sore,
For Kent Street well may say,
That had she lived a twelvemonth more,—
She had not died to-day

SONG

INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN SUNG BY MISS HARDCASTLE
IN THE COMEDY OF “ SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER ”

AIR — *The Humours of Ballamagavry*

AH me ! when shall I marry me ?
Lovers are plenty, but fail to relieve me
He, fond youth, that could carry me,
Offers to love, but means to deceive me

But I will rally, and combat the ruiner ,
Not a look nor a smile shall my passion discover.
She that gives all to the false one pursuing her
Makes but a penitent, and loses a lover.

STANZAS

ON THE TAKING OF QUEBEC, AND DEATH OF
GENERAL WOLFE

AMIDST the clamour of exulting joys,
Which triumph forces from the patriot heart,
Grief dares to mingle her soul-piercing voice,
And quells the raptures which from pleasure start

O Wolfe ! to thee a streaming flood of woe,
Sighing, we pay, and think e'en conquest dear ,
Quebec in vain shall teach our breast to glow,
Whilst thy sad fate extorts the heart-wrung tear

Alive, the foe thy dreadful vigour fled,
And saw thee fall with joy-pronouncing eyes
Yet they shall know thou conquerest, though dead !
Since from thy tomb a thousand heroes rise.

DRAMAS

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER ;
OR,
THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT
A COMEDY

To SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL D

DEAR SIR,—By inscribing this slight performance to you, I do not mean so much to compliment you as myself. It may do me some honour to inform the public, that I have lived many years in intimacy with you. It may serve the interests of mankind also to inform them, that the greatest wit may be found in a character, without impairing the most unaffected piety.

I have, particularly, reason to thank you for your partiality to this performance. The undertaking a comedy not merely sentimental was very dangerous, and Mr Colman, who saw this piece in its various stages, always thought it so. However, I ventured to trust it to the public, and, though it was necessarily delayed till late in the season, I have every reason to be grateful—

I am, dear sir, your most sincere friend and admirer,
OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

PROLOGUE

BY DAVID GARRICK, ESQ

Enter MR WOODWARD, dressed in black, and holding a handkerchief to his eyes

EXCUSE me, sirs, I pray—I can't yet speak—
I'm crying now—and have been all the week
“ 'Tis not alone this mourning suit,” good masters
“ I've that within ”—for which there are no plasters !
Pray, would you know the reason why I'm crying ?
The Comic Muse, long sick, is now a-dying !
And if she goes, my tears will never stop ,
For as a player, I can't squeeze out one drop
I am undone, that's all—shall lose my bread—
I'd rather, but that's nothing—lose my head
When the sweet maid is laid upon the bier,
Shuter and I shall be chief mourners here
To her a mawkish drab of spurious breed,
Who deals in sentimentals, will succeed !
Poor Ned and I are dead to all intents ,
We can as soon speak Greek as sentiments !
Both nervous grown, to keep our spirits up,
We now and then take down a hearty cup
What shall we do ? If Comedy forsake us,
They'll turn us out, and no one else will take us
But why can't I be moral ?—Let me try—
My heart thus pressing—fixed my face and eye—
With a sententious look, that nothing means,
(Faces are blocks in sentimental scenes)

Thus I begin " All is not gold that glitters,
Pleasure seems sweet, but proves a glass of bitters
When Ignorance enters, Folly is at hand
Learning is better far than house and land
Let not your virtue trip , who trips may stumble,
And virtue is not virtue, if she tumble "

I give it up—morals won't do for me ,
To make you laugh, I must play tragedy
One hope remains—hearing the maid was ill,
A Doctor comes this night to show his skill
To cheer her heart, and give your muscles motion,
He, in Five Draughts prepared, presents a potion
A kind of magic charm—for be assured,
If you will swallow it, the maid is cured
But desperate the Doctor, and her case is,
If you reject the dose, and make wry faces !
This truth he boasts, will boast it while he lives,
No poisonous drugs are mixed in what he gives
Should he succeed, you'll give him his degree ,
If not, within he will receive no fee !
The College *you*, must his pretensions back,
Pronounce him Regular, or dub him Quack.

SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

SIR CHARLES MARLOW	<i>Mr Gardner</i>
YOUNG MARLOW (<i>his son</i>)	<i>Mr Lee Lewes</i>
HARDCASTLE	<i>Mr Shuter</i>
HASTINGS	<i>Mr Dubellamy</i>
TONY LUMPRIN	<i>Mr Quick</i>
DIGGORY	<i>Mr Saunders</i>

WOMEN

MRS HARDCASTLE	<i>Mrs Green</i>
MISS HARDCASTLE	<i>Mrs Bulkley</i>
MISS NEVILLE	<i>Mrs Kniveton</i>
MAID	<i>Miss Williams</i>
<i>Landlord, Servants, etc etc</i>	

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE—*A Chamber in an old-fashioned House*

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE *and* MR HARDCASTLE

Mrs Hard I vow, Mr Hardcastle, you're very particular Is there a creature in the whole country but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little ? There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour Mrs Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter

Hard Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home !. In my time, the follies of

the town crept slowly among us, but now they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

Mrs Hard Ay, your times were fine times indeed, you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife, and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing-master, and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough. I hate such old-fashioned rumpery.

Hard And I love it. I love everything that's old. Old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine, and I believe, Dorothy (*taking her hand*), you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

Mrs Hard Lord, Mr Hardcastle, you're for ever at our Dorothys and your old wives. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me, by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

Hard Let me see, twenty added to twenty makes just fifty and seven.

Mrs Hard It's false, Mr Hardcastle, I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr Lumpkin, my first husband; and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

Hard Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

Mrs Hard No matter. Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred year.

Hard Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

Mrs Hard Humour, my dear, nothing but humour. Come, Mr. Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

Hard I'd sooner allow him a horse-pond If burning the footmen's shoes, frightening the maids, and worrying the kittens be humour, he has it It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popped my bald head in Mrs Frizzle's face

Mrs Hard And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good A school would be his death When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

Hard Latin for him! A cat and fiddle No, no; the alehouse and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to

Mrs Hard Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us Anybody that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

Hard Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms

Mrs Hard He coughs sometimes

Hard Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way

Mrs Hard I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

Hard And truly so am I, for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—(*Tony hallooing behind the scenes*)—O, there he goes—a very consumptive figure, truly

Enter TONY, crossing the stage

Mrs Hard Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

Tony I'm in haste, mother, I cannot stay

Mrs Hard You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear, you look most shockingly

Tony I can't stay, I tell you The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment There's some fun going forward.

Hard Ay, the alehouse, the old place; I thought so.

Mrs. Hard A low, pastry set of fellows

Tony Not so low, neither There's Dick Muggins the exciseman, Jack Slang the horse doctor, little Aminadab that grinds the music-box, and Tom Twist that spins the pewter platter

Mrs Hard Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least

Tony As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind, but I can't abide to disappoint myself

Mrs Hard (*Detaining him*) You shan't go

Tony I will, I tell you

Mrs Hard I say you shan't

Tony We'll see which is strongest, you or I

[*Exit, hauling her out*

Hard (*Solus*) Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate! the fashions of the times have almost infected her too. By living a year or two in town, she's as fond of gauze and French frippery as the best of them.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE

Hard Blessings on my pretty innocence! drest out as usual, my Kate Goodness! What a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain

Miss Hard You know our agreement, sir You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner, and in the evening I put on my housewife's dress to please you

Hard. Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement, and, by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

Miss Hard I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning

Hard. Then to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the

young gentleman I have chosen to be your husband from town this very day I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after

Miss Hard Indeed ! I wish I had known something of this before Bless me, how shall I behave ? It's a thousand to one I shan't like him , our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem

Hard Depend upon it, child, I'll never control your choice , but Mr Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend, Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding

Miss Hard Is he ?

Hard Very generous

Miss Hard I believe I shall like him

Hard Young and brave

Miss Hard I'm sure I shall like him

Hard And very handsome

Miss Hard My dear papa, say no more (*kissing his hand*), he's mine , I'll have him

Hard And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world

Miss Hard Eh ! you have frozen me to death again That word *reserved* has undone all the rest of his accomplishments A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband

Hard. On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues It was the very feature in his character that first struck me

Miss Hard He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so everything as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him

Hard Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you

Miss Hard My dear papa, why will you mortify one so? Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery, set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer

Hard Bravely resolved! In the meantime I'll go prepare the servants for his reception as we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits the first day's muster [Exit

Miss Hard (*Alone*) Lud, this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter Young, handsome these he put last, but I put them foremost Sensible, good-natured, I like all that But then reserved and sheepish, that's much against him Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't —But I vow I'm disposing of the husband before I have secured the lover

Enter MISS NEVILLE

Miss Hard I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening? Is there anything whimsical about me? Is it one of my well-looking days, child? Am I in face to-day?

Miss Nev Perfectly, my dear Yet now I look again —bless me! —sure no accident has happened among the anary birds or the gold fishes Has your brother or the cat been meddling? or has the last novel been too moving?

Miss Hard No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened with a lover

Miss Nev And his name——

Miss Hard Is Marlow.

Miss Nev Indeed!

Miss Hard The son of Sir Charles Marlow.

Miss Nev As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr Hastings, my admirer They are never asunder I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town

Miss Hard Never

Miss Nev He's a very singular character, I assure you Among women of reputation and virtue he is the modestest man alive, but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp you understand me

Miss Hard An odd character indeed I shall never be able to manage him What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success But how goes on your own affair, my dear? has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony as usual?

Miss Nev I have just come from one of our agreeable *tête-à-têtes* She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection

Miss Hard And her partiality is such, that she actually thinks him so A fortune like yours is no small temptation Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family

Miss Nev A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation But at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another

Miss Hard My good brother holds out stoutly I could almost love him for hating you so

Miss Nev It is a good-natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to anybody but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements *Allons!* Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical

Miss Hard. "Would it were bed-time, and all were well"

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE—*An Alehouse Room Several shabby Fellows with punch and tobacco TONY at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest, a mallet in his hand*

Omnes Hurree ! hurree ! hurree ! bravo !

First Fel Now, gentlemen, silence for a song The squire is going to knock himself down for a song

Omnes Ay, a song, a song !

Tony Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this alehouse, the Three Pigeons

SONG

Let schoolmasters puzzle their brain
 With grammar, and nonsense, and learning,
 Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,
 Gives *genus* a better discerning
 Let them brag of their heathenish gods,
 Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians,
 Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,
 They're all but a parcel of Pigeons
 Toroddle, toroddle, toroll

When methodist preachers come down,
 A-preaching that drinking is sinful,
 I'll wager the rascals a crown,
 They always preach best with a skinful
 But when you come down with your pence,
 For a slice of their scurvy religion,
 I'll leave it to all men of sense,
 But you, my good friend, are the Pigeon
 Toroddle, toroddle, toroll

Then come, put the jorum about,
 And let us be merry and clever,
 Our hearts and our liquors are stout,
 Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever.

Let some cry up woodcock or hare,
Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons,
But of all the *gav* birds in the air,
Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons
Toroddle, toroddle, toroll

Onnes Bravo, bravo!

First Fel The 'squire has got spunk in him

Second Fel I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low

Third Fel O damn anything that's low, I cannot bear it

Fourth Fel The genteel thing is the genteel thing any time if so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly

Thrd Fel I likes the maxum of it, Master Muggins What, though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that May this be my poison, if my bear ever dances but to the very genteeldest of tunes, "Water Parted," or "The minuet in Ariadne"

Second Fel What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him

Tony Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang I'd then show what it was to keep choice of company

Second Fel O he takes after his own father for that, To be sure old 'Squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on For winding the straight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls in the whole county

Tony Ecod, and when I'm of age, I'll be no bastard, I promise you I have been thinking of Bet Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning Well, Stingo, what's the matter?

Enter Landlord.

Land There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door They have lost their way upo' the forest, and they are talking something about Mr Hardcastle

Tony As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister Do they seem to be Londoners?

Land I believe they may They look woundily like Frenchmen

Tony Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling (*Exit Landlord*) Gentlemen, as they mayn't be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon [*Exeunt mob*]

Tony (*Solus*) Father-in-law has been calling me whelp and hound this half-year Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian But then I'm afraid—afraid of what? I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a year, and let him frighten me out of *that* if he can

Enter Landlord, conducting MARLOW and HASTINGS

Mar What a tedious uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore

Hast And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way

Mar I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet, and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer

Hast At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer

Tony No offence, gentlemen But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr Hardcastle in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

Hast Not in the least, sir, but should thank you for information.

Tony Nor the way you came ?

Hast No, sir, but if you can inform us——

Tony Whv, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—you have lost your way

Mar We wanted no ghost to tell us that

Tony Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came ?

Mar That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go

Tony No offence, but question for question is all fair, you know Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son ?

Hast We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention

Tony The daughter, a tall, trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole, the son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of

Mar Our information differs in this The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful, the son an awkward booby, reared up and spoiled at his mother's apron-string

Tony He-he-hem !—Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr Hardcastle's house this night, I believe

Hast Unfortunate !

Tony It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr Hardcastle's ! (*Winking upon the Landlord*) Mr Hardcastle's, of Quagmire Marsh, you understand me

Land Master Hardcastle's ! Lock-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong ! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash Lane

Mar Cross down Squash Lane !

Land Then you were to keep straight forward, till you came to four roads.

Mar. Come to where four roads meet ?

Tony Ay, but you must be sure to take only one of them

Mar O, sir, you're facetious

Tony Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crackskull Common there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward till you come to farmer Murrain's barn Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill——

Mar. Zounds, man ! we could as soon find out the longitude !

Hast What's to be done, Marlow ?

Mar This house promises but a poor reception, though perhaps the landlord can accommodate us

Land Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house

Tony And to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already (*After a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted*) I have hit it Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fire-side, with—three chairs and a bolster ?

Hast I hate sleeping by the fire-side

Mar And I detest your three chairs and a bolster

Tony You do, do you ? then, let me see—what if you go on a mile farther, to the Buck's Head, the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole county ?

Hast O ho ! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however

Land (*Apart to TONY*) Sure, you ben't sending them to your father's as an inn, be you ?

Tony Mum, you fool you. Let *them* find that out. (*To them*) You have only to keep on straight forward,

till you come to a large old house by the roadside. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

Hast Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

Tony No, no, but I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business, so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he! he! he! He'll be for giving you his company, and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman, and his aunt a justice of peace.

Land A troublesome old blade, to be sure, but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

Mar Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connection. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

Tony No, no, straight forward. I'll just step myself, and show you a piece of the way. (*To the Landlord*) Mum!

Land Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant—damn'd mischievous son of a whore. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE—*An old-fashioned House*

Enter HARDCASTLE, followed by three or four awkward Servants

Hard Well, I hope you are perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can show that you have been used to good company, without ever stirring from home.

Omnes Ay, ay

Hard When company comes you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frightened rabbits in a warren.

Omnes No, no

Hard You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a show at the side-table, and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger, and from your head, you blockhead you. See how Diggory carries his hands. They're a little too stiff, indeed, but that's no great matter.

Dig Ay, mind how I hold them. I learned to hold my hands this way when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill——

Hard You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us

talk, and not think of talking, you must see us drink, and not think of drinking, you must see us eat, and not think of eating

Dig By the laws, your worship, that's perfectly impossible Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forward, ecod, he's always wishing for a mouthful himself

Hard Blockhead! Is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as a belly-full in the parlour? Stay your stomach with that reflection

Dig Ecod, I thank your worship, I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry

Hard Diggory, you are too talkative—Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a-laughing, as if you made part of the company

Dig Then ecod your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room I can't help laughing at that—he! he! he!—for the soul of me We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha! ha! ha!

Hard Ha! ha! ha! The story is a good one Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please (*to DIGGORY*)—Eh, why don't you move?

Dig Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion

Hard What, will nobody move?

First Serv I'm not to leave this pleace

Second Serv I'm sure it's no pleace of mine

Third Serv Nor mine, for sartain

Dig Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine

Hard You numskulls! and so while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again—But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your

posts, you blockheads I'll go in the meantime and give my old friend's son a hearty reception at the gate

[*Exit* HARDCASTLE

Dig By the elevens, my pleace is gone quite out of my head

Rog I know that my pleace is to be everywhere

First Serv Where the devil is mine ?

Second Serv My pleace is to be nowhere at all , and so I'ze go about my business

[*Exeunt* Servants, *running about as if frightened, different ways*

Enter Servant *with candles, showing in* MARLOW
and HASTINGS

Serv Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome ! This way

Hast After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire Upon my word, a very well-looking house , antique but creditable

Mar The usual fate of a large mansion Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn

Hast As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries I have often seen a good side-board, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, inflame a reckoning confoundedly

Mar Travellers, George, must pay in all places the only difference is, that in good inns you pay dearly for luxuries , in bad inns you are fleeced and starved

Hast. You have lived very much among them In truth, I have been often surprised, that you who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance

Mar The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of ? My life has been chiefly spent in a college or an inn, in

seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—except my mother—But among females of another class, you know——

Hast Ay, among them you are impudent enough of all conscience.

Mar They are of *us*, you know

Hast But in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler, you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room

Mar Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate But I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally upset my resolution An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever counterfeit impudence

Hast If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker——

Mar Why, George, I can't say fine things to them; they freeze, they petrify me They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle, but, to me, a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation

Hast Ha! ha! ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

Mar Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy If, indeed, like an Eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grandmothers, and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring question of, Madam, will you marry me? No, no, that's a strain much above me, I assure you

Hast I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

Mar As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low, answer yes or no to all her demands—But for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face till I see my father's again.

Hast I'm surprised that one who is so warm a friend can be so cool a lover.

Mar To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you, the family don't know you, as my friend you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest.

Hast My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent, and her own inclination.

Mar Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the duchesses of Drury Lane. Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

Enter **HARDCASTLE**

Hard Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr. Marlow? Sir, you are heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception in the old style at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

Mar (*Aside*) He has got our names from the servants already. (*To him*) We approve your caution.

and hospitality, sir (*To Hastings*) I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine

Hard I beg, Mr Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house

Hast I fancy, Charles, you're right the first blow is half the battle I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold

Hard Mr Marlow—Mr Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no constraint in this house This is Liberty Hall, gentlemen You may do just as you please here

Mar Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

Hard Your talking of a retreat, Mr Marlow, puts me in mind of the Duke of Marlborough, when we went to besiege Denain He first summoned the garrison——

Mar Don't you think the *ventre d'or* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

Hard He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

Hast I think not: brown and yellow mix but very poorly

Hard I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

Mar The girls like finery

Hard Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war Now, says the Duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him—you must have heard of George Brooks—I'll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood So——

Mar What, my good friend, if you gave us a glass of punch in the meantime, it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour

Hard Punch, sir! (*Aside*) This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with

Mar Yes, sir, punch A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable This is Liberty Hall, you know

Hard Here's a cup, sir

Mar (*Aside*) So this fellow, in his Liberty Hall, will only let us have just what he pleases

Hard (*Taking the cup*) I hope you'll find it to your mind I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance (*Drinks*)

Mar (*Aside*) A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humour him a little Sir, my service to you. (*Drinks*)

Hast (*Aside*) I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman

Mar From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose

Hard. No, sir, I have long given that work over Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there is no business "for us that sell ale"

Hast. So, then, you have no turn for politics, I find

Hard Not in the least There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people, but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself Since that, I no more trouble my head about Hyder Ally, or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croker Sir, my service to you

Hast. So that with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good pleasant bustling life of it.

Hard I do stir about a great deal, that's certain
Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this
very parlour

Mar (*After drinking*) And you have an argument
in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in West-
minster Hall

Hard Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philos-
ophy

Mar (*Aside*) Well, this is the first time I ever heard
of an innkeeper's philosophy

Hast So then, like an experienced general, you attack
them on every quarter If you find their reason manage-
able, you attack it with your philosophy, if you find
they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's
your health, my philosopher (*Drinks*)

Hard Good, very good, thank you, ha! ha! ha!
Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene,
when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade
You shall hear

Mar Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I believe it's
almost time to talk about supper What has your
philosophy got in the house for supper?

Hard For supper, sir! (*Aside*) Was ever such a
request to a man in his own house?

Mar Yes, sir, supper, sir, I begin to feel an appetite
I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I
promise you

Hard (*Aside*) Such a brazen dog sure never my
eyes beheld (*To him*) Why, really, sir, as for supper,
I can't well tell My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle
these things between them. I leave these kind of things
entirely to them

Mar You do, do you?

Hard Entirely By the bye, I believe they are in
actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment
in the kitchen.

Mar. Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy
council. It's a way I have got When I travel, I always

choose to regulate my own supper Let the cook be called No offence I hope, sir

Hard O no, sir, none in the least, yet I don't know how, our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house

Hast Let's see your list of the larder then I ask it as a favour I always match my appetite to my bill of fare

Mar (To HARDCASTLE, who looks at them with surprise) Sir he's very right, and it's my way too

Hard Sir, you have a right to command here Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper I believe it's drawn out—Your manner, Mr Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, Colonel Wallop It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it

Hast (*Aside*) All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of the peace But let's hear the bill of fare

Mar (*Perusing*) What's here? For the first course, for the second course, for the dessert The devil, sir, do you think we have brought down a whole Joiners' Company, or the corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do

Hast But let's hear it

Mar. (*Reading*) For the first course, at the top, a pig and prune sauce

Hast Damn your pig, I say

Mar And damn your prune sauce, say I

Hard And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig with prune sauce is very good eating.

Mar At the bottom, a calf's tongue and brains

Hast Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir, I don't like them

Mar Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves I do

Hard (Aside) Their impudence confounds me *(To them)* Gentlemen, you are my guests, make what alterations you please Is there anything else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

Mar Item, a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a Florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream

Hast Confound your made dishes, I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table I'm for plain eating

Hard I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like, but if there be anything you have a particular fancy to—

Mar Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another Send us what you please So much for supper And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of

Hard I entreat you'll leave all that to me You shall not stir a step

Mar Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me, I always look to these things myself

Hard I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head

Mar You see I'm resolved on it *(Aside)* A very troublesome fellow this, as I ever met with

Hard Well, sir, I'm resolved at least to attend you *(Aside)* This may be modern modesty, but I never saw anything look so like old-fashioned impudence

[*Exeunt* MARLOW and HARDCASTLE]

Hast (Alone) So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome But who can be angry at those assiduties which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

Enter MISS NEVILLE.

Miss Nev My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

Hast Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn

Miss Nev An inn ! sure you mistake . my aunt, my guardian, lives here What could induce you to think this house an inn ?

Hast My friend, Mr Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here as to an inn, I assure you A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither

Miss Nev Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often , ha ! ha ! ha !

Hast He whom your aunt intends for you ? he of whom I have such just apprehensions ?

Miss Nev You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you You'd adore him, if you knew how heartily he despises me My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest

Hast Thou dear dissembler ! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here to get admittance into the family The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with their journey, but they'll soon be refreshed , and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where even among slaves the laws of marriage are respected

Miss Nev. I have often told you, that though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them I fancy I'm very near succeeding The instant they are put into my possession, you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours

Hast Perish the baubles ! Your person is all I desire In the meantime, my friend, Marlow must not be let into

his mistake I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution

Miss Nev But how shall we keep him in the deception? *Miss Hardcastle* is just returned from walking, what if we still continue to deceive him?—This, this way——
[*They confer*]

Enter MARLOW

Mar The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing. My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself, but his old-fashioned wife, on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us too, and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family—What have we got here?

Hast My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you!—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

Mar Cannot guess

Hast Our mistresses, boy, *Miss Hardcastle* and *Miss Neville*. Give me leave to introduce *Miss Constance Neville* to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighbourhood, they called on their return to take fresh horses here. *Miss Hardcastle* has just stepped into the next room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh?

Mar (*Aside*) I have been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment

Hast Well, but wasn't it the most fortunate thing in the world?

Mar Oh! yes. Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter—But our dresses, *George*, you know are in disorder—What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow?—To-morrow at her own house—it will be every bit as convenient—and rather more respectful—To-morrow let it be
[*Offering to go*]

Miss Nev By no means, sir Your ceremony will displease her The disorder of your dress will show the ardour of your impatience Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her

Mar O! the devil! how shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go You are to assist me, you know I shall be confoundedly ridiculous Yet, hang it! I'll take courage Hem!

Hast Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all's over She's but a woman, you know

Mar And, of all women, she that I dread most to encounter

*Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, as returned from walking,
a bonnet, etc*

Hast (Introducing them) Miss Hardcastle, Mr Marlow I'm proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other

Miss Hard (Aside) Now for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner *(After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted)* I'm glad of your safe arrival, sir I'm told you had some accidents by the way

Mar Only a few, madam Yes, we had some Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded Hem!

Hast (To him) You never spoke better in your whole life Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory

Miss Hard I'm afraid you flatter, sir You that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country

Mar (Gathering courage) I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

Miss Nev But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last

Hast (To him) Cicero never spoke better Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever

Mar (To him) Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two, to set me up again

Miss Hard An observer, like you, upon life were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure than to approve

Mar Pardon me, madam I was always willing to be amused The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness

Hast (To him) Bravo, bravo. Never spoke so well in your whole life Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr Marlow are going to be very good company I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview

Mar Not in the least, Mr Hastings We like your company of all things *(To him)* Zounds! George, sure you won't go? how can you leave us?

Hast Our presence will but spoil conversation, so we'll retire to the next room *(To him.)* You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tête-à-tête of our own

[Exeunt]

Miss Hard (After a pause) But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir the ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses

Mar (Relapsing into timidity) Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

Miss Hard And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them

Mar Perhaps so, madam But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex. But I'm afraid I grow tiresome

Miss Hard Not at all, sir, there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself, I could hear it for ever Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

Mar It's—a disease—of the mind, madam In

the variety of tastes there must be some who, wanting a relish—for—um—a—um

Miss Hard I understand you, sir There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting

Mar My meaning, madam, but infinitely better expressed And I can't help observing—a—

Miss Hard (*Aside*) Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? (*To him*) You were going to observe, sir—

Mar I was observing, madam—I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe

Miss Hard (*Aside*) I vow and so do I (*To him*) You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir

Mar Yes, madam In this age of hypocrisy there are few who upon strict inquiry do not—a—a—a—

Miss Hard I understand you perfectly, sir

Mar (*Aside*) Egad! and that's more than I do myself

Miss Hard You mean that in this hypocritical age there are few that do not condemn in public what they practise in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it

Mar True, madam, those who have most virtue in their mouths, have least of it in their bosoms But I'm sure I tire you, madam

Miss Hard Not in the least, sir, there's something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—pray, sir, go on

Mar Yes, madam I was saying—that there are some occasions, when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the—and puts us—upon a—a—a—

Miss Hard I agree with you entirely; a want of courage upon some occasions assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most want to excel. I beg you'll proceed

Mar. Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam—But

I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room I would not intrude for the world

Miss Hard I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life Pray go on

Mar Yes, madam, I was——But she beckons us to join her Madam, shall I do myself the honour to attend you ?

Miss Hard Well, then, I'll follow

Mar (*Aside*) This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me [*Exit.*]

Miss Hard (*Alone*) Ha ! ha ! ha ! Was there ever such a sober, sentimental interview ? I'm certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service But who is that somebody ? —That, faith, is a question I can scarce answer [*Exit.*]

*Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE, followed by
MRS HARDCASTLE and HASTINGS*

Tony What do you follow me for, cousin Con ? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging

Miss Nev I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame

Tony Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me, though ; but it won't do I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do , so I beg you'll keep your distance, I want no nearer relationship

[*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*]

Mrs Hard Well ! I vow, Mr Hastings, you are very entertaining There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

Hast Never there ! You amaze me ! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St. James's, or Tower Wharf.

Mrs Hard O! sir, you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighbouring rustics, but who can have a manner, that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every *tête-à-tête* from the Scandalous Magazine, and have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked Lane. Pray how do you like this head, Mr Hastings?

Hast Extremely elegant and *dégagée*, upon my word, madam. Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

Mrs Hard I protest, I dressed it myself from a print in the Ladies' Memorandum Book for the last year.

Hast Indeed! Such a head in a side-box at the play-house would draw as many gazers as my Lady Mayoress at a City Ball.

Mrs Hard I vow, since inoculation began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman, so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

Hast But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress (*Bowing*).

Mrs Hard Yet, what signifies my dressing when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr Hardcastle. all I can say will never argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bald, to plaster it over, like my Lord Pately, with powder.

Hast You are right, madam, for, as among the ladies there are none ugly, so among the men there are none old.

Mrs Hard But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic vivacity, he said I only wanted him to throw off his wig, to convert it into a *tête* for my own wearing.

Hast Intolerable! At your age you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

Mrs Hard Pray, Mr Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town ?

Hast Some time ago, forty was all the mode , but I'm told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter

Mrs Hard Seriously Then I shall be too young for the fashion

Hast No lady begins now to put on jewels till she's past forty For instance, Miss there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, as a mere maker of samplers

Mrs Hard And yet Miss Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all

Hast Your niece, is she ? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume ?

Mrs Hard My son, sir They are contracted to each other Observe their little sports They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. *(To them)* Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening ?

Tony I have been saying no soft things , but that it's very hard to be followed about so Ecod ! I've not a place in the house now that's left to myself, but the stable

Mrs. Hard Never mind him, Con, my dear He's in another story behind your back

Miss Nev There's something generous in my cousin's manner He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private

Tony That's a damned confounded—crack

Mrs Hard Ah ! he's a sly one Don't you think they are like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings ? The Blenkinsop mouth to a T They're of a size too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you Come, Tony

Tony You had as good not make me, I tell you. *(Measuring)*

Miss Nev O lud ! he has almost cracked my head

Mrs Hard O, the monster ! For shame, Tony You a man, and behave so !

Tony If I'm a man, let me have my fortin Ecod ! I'll not be made a fool of no longer

Mrs Hard Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I'm to get for the pains I have taken in your education ? I that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon ! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel ? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating ?

Tony Ecod ! you had reason to weep, for you have been dosing me ever since I was born I have gone through every receipt in the Complete Huswife ten times over, and you have thoughts of coursing me through Quincy next spring But, ecod ! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer

Mrs Hard Wasn't it all for your good, viper ? Wasn't it all for your good ?

Tony I wish you'd let me and my good alone, then Snubbing this way when I'm in spirits If I'm to have any good, let it come of itself, not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so

Mrs Hard That's false, I never see you when you're in spirits No, Tony, you then go to the alehouse or kennel I'm never to be delighted with your agreeable wild notes, unfeeling monster !

Tony Ecod ! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two

Mrs Hard Was ever the like ? But I see he wants to break my heart, I see he does

Hast. Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I'm certain I can persuade him to his duty

Mrs. Hard Well, I must retire Come, Constance, my love You see, Mr. Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation : was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy ?

[*Exeunt* MRS HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE

Tony (*Singing*) "There was a young man riding by,
and fain would have his will Rang do didlo dee"——
Don't mind her Let her cry It's the comfort of her
heart I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an
hour together, and they said they liked the book the
better the more it made them cry

Hast Then you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my
pretty young gentleman?

Tony That's as I find 'um

Hast Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare
answer? And yet she appears to me a pretty well-
tempered girl

Tony. That's because you don't know her as well as I.
Ecod! I know every inch about her, and there's not a
more bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom

Hast (*Aside*) Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

Tony I have seen her since the height of that. She
has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the
first day's breaking

Hast To me she appears sensible and silent

Tony Ay, before company But when she's with her
playmate, she's as loud as a hog in a gate

Hast But there is a meek modesty about her that
charms me

Tony Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up,
and you're flung in a ditch

Hast Well, but you must allow her a little beauty —
Yes, you must allow her some beauty

Tony Bandbox! She's all a made-up thing, mun
Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you
might then talk of beauty Ecod, she has two eyes as
black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit
cushion She'd made two of she

Hast. Well, what say you to a friend that would take
this bitter bargain off your hands?

Tony Anon

Hast Would you thank him that would take Miss
Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

Tony Ay, but where is there such a friend, for who would take *her*?

Hast I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

Tony Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and maybe get you a part of her fortune beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

Hast My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

Tony Come along, then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. (*Singing*)

“ We are the boys
That fear no noise
Where the thundering cannons roar ”

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE THIRD

Enter HARDCASTLE, alone

Hard What could my old friend Sir Charles mean by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy-chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter. She will certainly be shocked at it.

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE, plainly dressed

Hard Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress, as I bade you, and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

Miss Hard I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

Hard And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

Miss Hard You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

Hard I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

Miss Hard I never saw anything like it: and a man of the world too!

Hard Ay, he learned it all abroad—what a fool was

I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling. He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

Miss Hard It seems all natural to him.

Hard A good deal assisted by bad company and a French dancing-master.

Miss Hard Sure you mistake, papa! A French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that awkward address—that bashful manner——

Hard Whose look? whose manner, child?

Miss Hard Mr Marlow's his *mauvaise honte*, his timidity, struck me at the first sight.

Hard Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

Miss Hard Sure, sir, you rally! I never saw any one so modest.

Hard And can you be serious? I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

Miss Hard Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

Hard He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again.

Miss Hard He treated me with diffidence and respect; censured the manners of the age, admired the prudence of girls that never laughed, tired me with apologies for being tiresome, then left the room with a bow, and "Madam, I would not for the world detain you."

Hard He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before; asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer, interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

Miss Hard One of us must certainly be mistaken.

Hard If he be what he has shown himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

Miss Hard And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine

Hard In one thing then we are agreed—to reject him.

Miss Hard Yes but upon conditions For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming—if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate—I don't know—the fellow is well enough for a man—Certainly, we don't meet many such at a horse-race in the country

Hard If we should find him so——But that's impossible The first appearance has done my business I'm seldom deceived in that

Miss Hard And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance

Hard Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture With her, a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue

Miss Hard I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense, won't end with a sneer at my understanding ?

Hard Pardon me, Kate But if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps

Miss Hard And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries ?

Hard Agreed But depend on't I'm in the right

Miss Hard And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong [Exeunt

Enter TONY, running in with a casket

Tony Ecod ! I have got them. Here they are My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither O ! my genius, is that you ?

Enter HASTINGS

Hast My dear friend, how have you managed with
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your mother ? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last ? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off

Tony And here's something to bear your charges by the way (*giving the casket*) , your sweetheart's jewels Keep them and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them

Hast But how have you procured them from your mother ?

Tony Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs I procured them by the rule of thumb If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do ? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time

Hast Thousands do it every day But to be plain with you , Miss Neville is endeavouring to procure them from her aunt this very instant If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them

Tony Well, keep them, till you know how it will be But I know how it will be well enough , she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head

Hast But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them

Tony Never you mind her resentment, leave *me* to manage that I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker Zounds ! here they are Morrice ! Prance !
[*Exit* HASTINGS.]

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE and MISS NEVILLE

Mrs Hard Indeed, Constance, you amaze me Such a girl as you want jewels ! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs

Miss Nev But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam

Mrs Hard Yours, my dear, can admit of none That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments Besides,

child, jewels are quite out at present Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my Lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back

Miss Nev But who knows, madam, but somebody that shall be nameless would like me best with all my little finery about me ?

Mrs Hard Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers What do you think, Tony, my dear ? does your cousin Con want any jewels in your eyes to set off her beauty ?

Tony That's as thereafter may be

Miss Nev My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me

Mrs Hard A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things They would make you look like the court of King Solomon at a puppet-show Besides, I believe, I can't readily come at them They may be missing, for aught I know to the contrary

Tony (*Apart to MRS HARDCASTLE*) Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them ? Tell her they're lost It's the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness

Mrs Hard (*Apart to TONY*) You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you ? He ! he ! he !

Tony Never fear me Ecod ! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes

Miss Nev I desire them but for a day, madam Just to be permitted to show them as relics, and then they may be locked up again

Mrs Hard To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them you should have them They're missing, I assure you Lost, for aught I know, but we must have patience wherever they are

Miss Nev I'll not believe it ! this is but a shallow

pretence to deny me I know they are too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss——

Mrs Hard Don't be alarmed, Constance If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found

Tony That I can bear witness to They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't

Mrs Hard You must learn resignation, my dear, for though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience See me, how calm I am

Miss Nev Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others

Mrs Hard Now I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery We shall soon find them, and in the meantime you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found

Miss Nev I detest garnets

Mrs Hard The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion You have often seen how well they look upon me You *shall* have them [*Exit*

Miss Nev I dislike them of all things You shan't stir—Was ever anything so provoking, to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear her trumpery?

Tony Don't be a fool If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get The jewels are your own already I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark, he'll tell you more of the matter Leave me to manage her

Miss Nev My dear cousin!

Tony Vanish She's here, and has missed them already. [*Exit* MISS NEVILLE] Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about like a Catherine wheel

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE

Mrs. Hard Confusion! thieves! robbers! we are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone.

Tony What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma ? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family !

Mrs Hard We are robbed My bureau has been broken open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone

Tony Oh ! is that all ? Ha ! ha ! ha ! By the laws, I never saw it acted better in my life Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha ! ha ! ha !

Mrs Hard Whv, boy, I *am* ruined in earnest My bureau has been broken open, and all taken away

Tony Stick to that. ha ! ha ! ha ! stick to that I'll bear witness, you know, call me to bear witness

Mrs Hard I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever

Tony Sure I know they are gone, and I'm to say so

Mrs Hard My dearest Tony, but hear me They're gone, I say

Tony By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha ! ha ! I know who took them well enough, ha ! ha ! ha !

Mrs Hard Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest ? I tell you I'm not in jest, booby

Tony That's right, that's right, you must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone

Mrs Hard Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me ? Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool ? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other ?

Tony I can bear witness to that

Mrs Hard Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly. My poor niece, what will become of her ? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress ?

Tony I can bear witness to that

Mrs Hard Do you insult me, monster ? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will

Tony I can bear witness to that

[He runs off, she follows him]

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE and Maid

Miss Hard What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn ! ha ! ha ! I don't wonder at his impudence

Maid But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the bar-maid He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam

Miss Hard Did he ? Then as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress ? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the *Beaux Stratagem* ?

Maid It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company

Miss Hard And are you sure he does not remember my face or person ?

Maid Certain of it

Miss Hard I vow, I thought so, for, though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview Indeed, if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

Maid But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake ?

Miss Hard In the first place, I shall be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to market Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance, and that's no small victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex But my chief aim is, to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force before I offer to combat.

Maid But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

Miss Hard Never fear me I think I have got the true bar cant—Did your honour call?—Attend the Lion there—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel—The Lamb has been outrageous this half-hour

Maid It will do, madam But he's here [*Exit Maid*]

Enter MARLOW

Mar What a bawling in every part of the house! I have scarce a moment's repose If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story if I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess with her curtsy down to the ground I have at last got a moment to myself, and now for recollection [*Walks and muses*]

Miss Hard Did you call, sir? Did your honour call?

Mar (*Musing*) As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me

Miss Hard Did your honour call? (*She still places herself before him, he turning away*)

Mar No, child (*Musing*) Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints

Miss Hard I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring

Mar No, no (*Musing*) I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself by returning

[*Taking out his tablets, and perusing*]

Miss Hard Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

Mar I tell you, no

Miss Hard I should be glad to know, sir We have such a parcel of servants!

Mar No, no, I tell you (*Looks full in her face*) Yes, child, I think I did call I wanted—I wanted—I vow, child, you are vastly handsome

Miss Hard. O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed

Mar Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye Yes,

yes, my dear, I did call Have you got any of your—a—what d'ye call it in the house ?

Miss Hard No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days

Mar. One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of a trial, of the nectar of your lips , perhaps I might be disappointed in that too

Miss Hard Nectar ! nectar ! That's a liquor there's no call for in these parts French, I suppose We sell no French wines here, sir

Mar Of true English growth, I assure you

Miss Hard Then it's odd I should not know it We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years

Mar Eighteen years ! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you ?

Miss Hard O ! sir, I must not tell my age They say women and music should never be dated

Mar To guess at this distance, you can't be much above forty (*approaching*) Yet, nearer, I don't think so much (*approaching*) By coming close to some women they look younger still , but when we come very close indeed—(*attempting to kiss her*)

Miss Hard Pray, sir, keep your distance One would think you wanted to know one's age, as they do horses, by mark of mouth

Mar I protest, child, you use me extremely ill If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can ever be acquainted ?

Miss Hard And who wants to be acquainted with you ? I want no such acquaintance, not I I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle, that was here awhile ago, in this obstropolous manner I'll warrant me, before her you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of peace

Mar (*Aside*) Egad, she has hit it, sure enough! (*To her*) In awe of her, child? Ha! ha! ha! A mere awkward squinting thing, no, no I find you don't know me I laughed and rallied her a little, but I was unwilling to be too severe No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

Miss Hard O! then, sir, you are a favourite, I find, among the ladies?

Mar Yes, my dear, a great favourite And yet hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow At the Ladies' Club in town I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by My name is Solomons, Mr Solomons, my dear, at your service (*Offering to salute her*)

Miss Hard Hold, sir, you are introducing me to your club, not to yourself And you're so great a favourite there, you say?

Mar Yes, my dear There's Mrs Mantrap, Lady Betty Blackleg, the Countess of Sligo, Mrs Langhorns, old Miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place

Miss Hard Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

Mar Yes, as merry as cards, supper, wine, and old women can make us

Miss Hard And their agreeable Rattle, ha! ha! ha!

Mar (*Aside*) Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks You laugh, child?

Miss Hard I can't but laugh, to think what time they all have for minding their work or their family

Mar (*Aside*) All's well, she don't laugh at me (*To her*) Do you ever work, child?

Miss Hard Ay, sure There's not a screen or quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that

Mar. Odso! then you must show me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. (*Seizing her hand*)

Miss Hard Ay, but the colours do not look well by candlelight You shall see all in the morning (*Struggling*)

Mar And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance — Pshaw! the father here! My old luck I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following

[*Exit* MARLOW

Enter HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise*

Hard So, madam So, I find *this* is your *modest* lover This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance Kate, Kate, art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

Miss Hard Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for, you'll be convinced of it as well as I

Hard By the hand of my body, I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Didn't I see him haul you about like a milkmaid? And now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

Miss Hard But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him

Hard. The girl would actually make one run mad! I tell you, I'll not be convinced I am convinced He has scarce been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives You may like his impudence, and call it modesty; but my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications

Miss Hard Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

Hard. You shall not have half the time, for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

Miss Hard Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you

Hard Well, an hour let it be then But I'll have no trifling with your father All fair and open, do you mind me

Miss Hard I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride, for your kindness is such, that my duty as yet has been inclination
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FOURTH

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Hast You surprise me , Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night ! Where have you had your information ?

Miss Nev You may depend upon it I just saw his letter to Mr Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son

Hast Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives He knows me , and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family

Miss Nev The jewels, I hope, are safe ?

Hast Yes, yes, I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage In the meantime, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement I have had the squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses , and if I should not see him again, will write him further directions [*Exit*

Miss Nev Well ! success attend you In the meantime I'll go and amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin [*Exit.*

Enter MARLOW, followed by a Servant

Mar I wonder what Hastings could mean by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post-coach at an inn door Have you deposited the casket

with the landlady, as I ordered you ? Have you put it into her own hands ?

Ser Yes, your honour

Mar She said she'd keep it safe, did she ?

Ser Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough, she asked me how I came by it, and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself

[*Exit* Servant.]

Mar Ha ! ha ! ha ! They're safe, however What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst ! This little bar-maid though runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family She's mine, she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken

Enter HASTINGS

Hast Bless me ! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden Marlow here, and in spirits too !

Mar Give me joy, George Crown me, shadow me with laurels ! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women

Hast Some women, you mean But what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us ?

Mar Didn't you see the tempting, brisk, lovely little thing, that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle ?

Hast Well, and what then ?

Mar She's mine, you rogue you Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips, but, egad ! she would not let me kiss them though

Hast But are you so sure, so very sure of her ?

Mar Why, man, she talked of showing me her work above stairs, and I am to improve the pattern

Hast But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honour ?

Mar Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it, there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly pay for

Hast I believe the girl has virtue

Mar And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it

Hast You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? Is it in safety?

Mar Yes, yes It's safe enough I have taken care of it But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn door a place of safety? Ah! numskull! I have taken better precautions for you than you did for yourself—I have——

Hast What?

Mar I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you

Hast To the landlady!

Mar The landlady

Hast You did?

Mar I did She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know

Hast Yes, she'll bring it forth with a witness

Mar Wasn't I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion

Hast (*Aside*) He must not see my uneasiness

Mar You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks Sure nothing has happened?

Hast No, nothing Never was in better spirits in all my life And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge

Mar Rather too readily For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger too Ha! ha! ha!

Hast He! he! he! They're safe, however

Mar As a guinea in a miser's purse

Hast (*Aside*.) So now all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it (*To him*.) Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty

She Stoops to Conquer

III

bar-maid, and, he! he! he! may you be as successful for yourself, as you have been for me! [*Exit.*]

Mar Thank ye, George I ask no more Ha! ha! ha!

Enter HARDCASTLE

Hard I no longer know my own house It's turned all topsy-turvy His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer, and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm (*To him*) Mr Marlow, your servant I'm your very humble servant (*Bowing low*)

Mar Sir, your humble servant (*Aside*) What's to be the wonder now?

Hard I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir I hope you think so?

Mar I do from my soul, sir I don't want much entreaty I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes

Hard I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

Mar I protest, my very good sir, that is no fault of mine If they don't drink as they ought, they are to blame I ordered them not to spare the cellar I did, I assure you (*To the side scene*) Here, let one of my servants come up (*To him*) My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below

Hard Then they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied!

Mar They had, I assure you You shall hear from one of themselves

Enter Servant, drunk

Mar. You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What

were my orders ? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house ?

Hard (Aside) I begin to lose my patience

Jer Please your honour, liberty and Fleet Street for ever ! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, damme ! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon—hiccup—on my conscience, sir

Mar You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer-barrel

Hard Zounds ! he'll drive me distracted, if I contain myself any longer Mr Marlow—Sir, I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end I'm now resolved to be master here, sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly

Mar Leave your house !—Sure you jest, my good friend ! What ? when I'm doing what I can to please you

Hard. I tell you, sir, you don't please me, so I desire you'll leave my house

Mar Sure you cannot be serious ? At this time o' night, and such a night ? You only mean to banter me

Hard I tell you, sir, I'm serious ! and now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir, this house is mine, and I command you to leave directly

Mar Ha ! ha ! ha ! A puddle in a storm I shan't stir a step, I assure you (*In a serious tone*) This your house, fellow ! It's my house This is my house Mine, while I choose to stay What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir ? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before

Hard Nor I, confound me if ever I did To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to

get drunk, and then to tell me, "This house is mine, sir" By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh Ha! ha! ha! Pray, sir (*bantering*), as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

Mar Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it

Hard There are a set of prints, too What think you of the Rake's Progress, for your own apartment?

Mar Bring me your bill, I say, and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly

Hard Then there's a mahogany table that you may see your own face in

Mar My bill, I say

Hard I had forgot the great chair for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal

Mar Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't

Hard Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred modest man as a visitor here, but now I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully, but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it [*Exit.*]

Mar How's this? Sure I have not mistaken the house Everything looks like an inn The servants cry, coming, the attendance is awkward, the bar-maid, too, to attend us But she's here, and will further inform me Whither so fast, child? A word with you

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE

Miss Hard Let it be short, then. I'm in a hurry (*Aside*) I believe he begins to find out his mistake. But it's too soon quite to undecerve him

Mar Pray, child, answer me one question What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

Miss Hard. A relation of the family, sir

Mar What, a poor relation

Miss Hard Yes, sir A poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them

Mar That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn

Miss Hard. Inn ! O law——what brought that in your head ? One of the best families in the country keep an inn—Ha ! ha ! ha ! old Mr Hardcastle's house an inn !

Mar Mr Hardcastle's house ! Is this Mr Hardcastle's house, child ?

Miss Hard Ay, sure ! Whose else should it be ?

Mar So then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on O, confound my stupid head, I shall be laughed at over the whole town I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops The *Dullissimo Maccaroni* To mistake this house of all others for an inn, and my father's old friend for an innkeeper ! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for ! What a silly puppy do I find myself ! There, again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid

Miss Hard Dear me ! dear me ! I'm sure there's nothing in my *behaviour* to put me on a level with one of that stamp

Mar Nothing, my dear, nothing But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber My stupidity saw everything the wrong way I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurements But it's over This house I no more show *my* face in

Miss Hard I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you. I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me I'm sure I should be sorry (*pretending to cry*) if he left the family upon my account I'm sure I should be sorry if people said anything amiss, since I have no fortune but my character

Mar (*Aside*) By Heaven ! she weeps This is the

first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me (*To her*) Excuse me, my lovely girl, you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance. But to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, makes an honourable connection impossible, and I can never harbour a thought of seducing simplicity that trusted in my honour, of bringing ruin upon one whose only fault was being too lovely.

Miss Hard (*Aside*) Generous man! I now begin to admire him (*To him*) But I am sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and though I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind, and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want a fortune.

Mar And why now, my pretty simplicity?

Miss Hard Because it puts me at a distance from one that, if I had a thousand pounds, I would give it all to.

Mar (*Aside*) This simplicity bewitches me, so that if I stay, I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her (*To her*) Your partiality in my favour, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell. [*Exit*]

Miss Hard I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I *stooped to conquer*; but will undeceive my papa, who perhaps may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit*]

Enter TONY and MISS NEVILLE.

Tony Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing, but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

Miss Nev But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake

us in this distress? If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse

Tony To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistle-jacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes, we must court a bit or two more, for fear she would suspect us

[They retire, and seem to fondle]

Enter MRS. HARDCASTLE

Mrs Hard Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married, and then let her keep her own fortune. But what do I see? fondling together, as I'm alive. I never saw Tony so sprightly before. Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves? What, billing, exchanging stolen glances and broken murmurs? Ah!

Tony As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

Mrs Hard A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

Miss Nev Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

Tony O! it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

Miss Nev Agreeable cousin! Who can help admiring that natural humour, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless (*patting his cheek*)—ah! it's a bold face.

Mrs Hard Pretty innocence!

Tony I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that over the haspicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

Mrs Hard Ah! he would charm the bird from the tree I was never so happy before My boy takes after his father, poor Mr Lumpkin, exactly The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently You shall have them Isn't he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married to-morrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr Drowsy's sermons, to a fitter opportunity

Enter DIGGORY

Dig Where's the 'squire? I have got a letter for your worship

Tony Give it to my mamma She reads all my letters first

Dig I had orders to deliver it into your own hands

Tony Who does it come from?

Dig Your worship mun ask that o' the letter itself

Tony I could wish to know though (*turning the letter, and gazing on it*)

Miss Nev (Aside) Undone! undone! A letter to him from Hastings I know the hand If my aunt sees it, we are ruined for ever I'll keep her employed a little if I can (*To MRS HARDCASTLE*) But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr Marlow We so laughed — You must know, madam.—This way a little, for he must not hear us

[*They confer*

Tony (Still gazing) A damned cramp piece of penmanship, as ever I saw in my life I can read your print hand very well But here are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail — "To Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire" It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough, but when I come to open it, it's all—buzz. That's hard, very hard, for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence

Mrs Hard Ha! ha! ha! Very well, very well And so my son was too hard for the philosopher.

Miss Nev Yes, madam, but you must hear the rest, madam A little more this way, or he may hear us You'll hear how he puzzled him again

Mrs Hard He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks

Tony (*Still gazing*) A damned up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor —(*Reading*) Dear Sir,—ay, that's that Then there's an M, and a T, and an S, but whether the next be an izzard, or an R, confound me, I cannot tell

Mrs Hard What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

Miss Nev Pray, aunt, let me read it Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I (*Twitching the letter from him*) Do you know who it is from?

Tony Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder

Miss Nev Ay, so it is (*Pretending to read*) Dear 'Squire, hoping that you're in health, as I am at this present The gentlemen of the Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of Goose-green quite out of feather The odds—um—odd battle—um—long fighting—um—here, here, it's all about cocks and fighting, it's of no consequence, here, put it up, put it up (*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him*)

Tony But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea Here, mother, do you make it out Of no consequence! (*Giving MRS HARDCASTLE the letter*)

Mrs Hard How's this?—(*Reads*) "Dear 'Squire, I'm now waiting for Miss Neville, with a post-chaise and pair, at the bottom of the garden, but I find my horses yet unable to perform the journey. I expect you'll assist us with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised Dispatch is necessary, as the *hag* (ay, the hag), your mother, will otherwise suspect us! Yours, Hastings" Grant me patience I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me

Miss Nev I hope, madam, you'll suspend your re-

sentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design, that belongs to another

Mrs Hard (*Curtseying very low*) Fine spoken, madam, you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection, madam (*Changing her tone*) And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut were you, too, joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with *me* Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me You too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory! I'll show you, that I wish you better than you do yourselves [*Exit*

Miss Nev So now I'm completely ruined

Tony Ay, that's a sure thing

Miss Nev What better could be expected from being connected with such a stupid fool,—and after all the nods and signs I made him?

Tony By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business You were so nice and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

Enter HASTINGS

Hast. So, sir, I find by my servant, that you have shown my letter, and betrayed us Was this well done, young gentleman?

Tony Here's another Ask miss, there, who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine

Enter MARLOW

Mar So I have been finely used here among you.

Rendered contemptible, driven into ill manners, despised, insulted, laughed at

Tony Here's another We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently

Miss New And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation

Mar. What can I say to him, a mere boy, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection?

Hast A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction

Miss New Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments

Hast An insensible cub

Mar. Replete with tricks and mischief

Tony Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other—with baskets

Mar As for him, he's below resentment But your conduct, Mr Hastings, requires an explanation You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me

Hast Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr Marlow

Mar But, sir——

Miss New Mr Marlow, we never kept on your mistake till it was too late to undeceive you

Enter Servant

Ser My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam The horses are putting to Your hat and things are in the next room We are to go thirty miles before morning *[Exit Servant]*

Miss New Well, well I'll come presently

Mar (To HASTINGS) Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation

Hast Was it well done, sir, if you're upon that

subject, to deliver what I entrusted to yourself, to the care of another, sir ?

Miss New Mr Hastings ! Mr Marlow ! Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute ? I implore, I entreat you——

Enter Servant

Ser Your cloak, madam My mistress is impatient

[*Exit Servant*]

Miss New I come Pray be pacified If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension

Enter Servant

Ser Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam The horses are waiting

Miss New O, Mr Marlow ! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I'm sure it would convert your resentment into pity

Mar I'm so distracted with a variety of passions, that I don't know what I do Forgive me, madam George, forgive me You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it

Hast The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

Miss New Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me that I think, that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection If——

Miss Hard (Within) Miss Neville Constance, why Constance, I say

Miss New I'm coming Well, constancy, remember, constancy is the word

[*Exit*]

Hast My heart ! how can I support this ? To be so near happiness, and such happiness

Mar (To TONY) You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly What might be amusement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress

Tony (From a reverie) Ecod, I have hit it It's

here Your hands Yours and yours, my poor Sulky !
—My boots there, ho !—Meet me two hours hence at
the bottom of the garden , and if you don't find Tony
Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought
for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet
Bouncer into the bargain Come along My boots,
ho !

[Exeunt.]

ACT THE FIFTH

(SCENE *continued*)

Enter HASTINGS and Servant

Hast You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say ?

Ser Yes, your honour They went off in a post-coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback They're thirty miles off by this time

Hast Then all my hopes are over

Ser Yes, sir Old Sir Charles has arrived He and the old gentleman of the house have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half-hour They are coming this way

Hast Then I must not be seen So now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden This is about the time *[Exit*

Enter SIR CHARLES and HARDCASTLE

Hard Ha ! ha ! ha ! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands !

Sir Cha And the reserve with which I suppose he treated all your advances

Hard And yet he might have seen something in me above a common innkeeper, too

Sir Cha Yes, Dick, but he mistook you for an uncommon innkeeper, ha ! ha ! ha !

Hard Well, I'm in too good spirits to think of anything but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our

families will make our personal friendships hereditary, and though my daughter's fortune is but small——

Sir Cha Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness and increase it. If they like each other, as you say they do——

Hard If, man! I tell you they *do* like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

Sir Cha But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

Hard I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself, and here he comes to put you out of your *ifs*, I warrant him.

Enter MARLOW

Mar I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion.

Hard Tut, boy, a trifle! You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again. She'll never like you the worse for it.

Mar Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

Hard Approbation is but a cold word, Mr Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

Mar Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

Hard Come, boy, I'm an old fellow, and know what's what as well as you that are younger. I know what has passed between you, but mum.

Mar Sure, sir, nothing has passed between us but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family.

Hard Impudence! No, I don't say that—not quite impudence—though girls like to be played with, and

rumpled a little too, sometimes But she has told no tales, I assure you

Mar I never gave her the slightest cause.

Hard Well, well, I like modesty in its place well enough But this is over-acting, young gentleman You may be open Your father and I will like you all the better for it

Mar May I die, sir, if I ever——

Hard I tell you, she don't dislike you, and as I'm sure you like her——

Mar Dear sir—I protest, sir——

Hard I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you

Mar But hear me, sir——

Hard Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moment's delay will be doing mischief So——

Mar But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting

Hard (*Aside*) This fellow's formal modest impudence is beyond bearing

Sir Cha And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

Mar As Heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house in which I suffer so many mortifications [Exit.]

Sir Cha I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted.

Hard And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance

Sir Cha I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

Hard Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity

Enter MISS HARDCASTLE.

Hard Kate, come hither, child Answer us sincerely and without reserve has Mr Marlow made you any professions of love and affection ?

Miss Hard The question is very abrupt, sir But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has

Hard (To SIR CHARLES) You see

Sir Cha And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview ?

Miss Hard Yes, sir, several.

Hard (To SIR CHARLES) You see

Sir Cha But did he profess any attachment ?

Miss Hard A lasting one

Sir Cha Did he talk of love ?

Miss Hard Much, sir

Sir Cha Amazing ! And all this formally ?

Miss Hard Formally

Hard Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied

Sir Cha And how did he behave, madam ?

Miss Hard As most profest admirers do said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine, mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy speech, and ended with pretended rapture

Sir Cha Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive this forward canting ranting manner by no means describes him, and, I am confident, he never sat for the picture

Miss Hard Then, what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity ? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

Sir Cha Agreed And if I find him what you describe,
all my happiness in him must have an end [Exit.

Miss Hard And if you don't find him what I describe
—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning
[Exeunt

SCENE changes to the back of the Garden

Enter HASTINGS

Hast What an idiot am I, to wait here for a fellow
who probably takes a delight in mortifying me He
never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer.
What do I see? It is he! and perhaps with news of my
Constance.

Enter TONY, booted and spattered

Hast My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of
your word This looks like friendship

Tony Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you
have in the world, if you knew but all This riding by
night, by the bye, is cursedly tiresome It has shook
me worse than the basket of a stage-coach

Hast But how? where did you leave your fellow-
travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

Tony Five-and-twenty miles in two hours and a half
is no such bad driving The poor beasts have smoked
for it rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a
fox than ten with such varment

Hast Well, but where have you left the ladies? I
die with impatience

Tony Left them! Why, where should I leave them
but where I found them?

Hast This is a riddle

Tony Riddle me this then. What's that goes round
the house, and round the house, and never touches the
house?

Hast I'm still astray.

Tony Why, that's it, mon I have led them astray
By jingo, there's not a pond or a slough within five miles
of the place but they can tell the taste of

Hast Ha ! ha ! ha ! I understand you took them
in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward,
and so you have at last brought them home again

Tony You shall hear I first took them down
Feather-bed Lane, where we stuck fast in the mud
I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill
I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath,
and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them
in the horse-pond at the bottom of the garden

Hast But no accident, I hope ?

Tony No, no Only mother is confoundedly frightened
She thinks herself forty miles off She's sick of the journey,
and the cattle can scarce crawl So if your own horses be ready,
you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here
can budge a foot to follow you

Hast My dear friend, how can I be grateful ?

Tony Ay, now it's dear friend, noble 'squire Just now,
it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts
Damn *your* way of fighting, I say After we take a knock
in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends.
But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead,
and you might go kiss the hangman

Hast The rebuke is just But I must hasten to relieve
Miss Neville if you keep the old lady employed,
I promise to take care of the young one

[*Exit* HASTINGS.]

Tony Never fear me Here she comes Vanish.
She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist
like a mermaid

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE

Mrs Hard Oh, Tony, I'm killed ! Shook ! Battered
to death I shall never survive it. That last jolt,

that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business

Tony Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

Mrs Hard I wish we were at home again. I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way. Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

Tony By my guess we should come upon Crackskull Common, about forty miles from home.

Mrs Hard O lud! O lud! The most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

Tony Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid—Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No, it's only a tree—Don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard The fright will certainly kill me.

Tony Do you see anything like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

Mrs Hard Oh, death!

Tony No, it's only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid.

Mrs Hard As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us. Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

Tony (*Aside*) Father-in-law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks. (*To her.*) Ah, it's a highwayman with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill-looking fellow.

Mrs Hard Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

Tony Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger, I'll cough, and cry hem. When I cough, be sure to keep close. (*MRS HARDCASTLE hides behind a tree in the back scene.*)

Enter **HARDCASTLE**

Hard I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help Oh, Tony! is that you? I did not expect you so soon back Are your mother and her charge in safety?

Tony Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's Hem

Mrs Hard (From behind) Ah, death! I find there's danger

Hard Forty miles in three hours, sure that's too much, my youngster

Tony Stout horses and willing minds make short journeys, as they say Hem

Mrs Hard (From behind) Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm

Hard But I heard a voice here, I should be glad to know from whence it came

Tony It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir I was saying that forty miles in four hours was very good going Hem As to be sure it was Hem I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air We'll go in, if you please Hem

Hard. But if you talked to yourself you did not answer yourself I'm certain I heard two voices, and am resolved (*raising his voice*) to find the other out

Mrs Hard (From behind) Oh! he's coming to find me out. Oh!

Tony What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem I'll lay down my life for the truth—hem—I'll tell you all, sir (*Detaining him*)

Hard I tell you I will not be detained I insist on seeing It's in vain to expect I'll believe you

Mrs Hard (Running forward from behind) O lud! he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me Take my money, my life, but spare that young gentleman, spare my child, if you have any mercy

Hard My wife, as I'm a Christian. From whence can she come ? or what does she mean ?

Mrs Hard (Kneeling) Take compassion on us, good Mr Highwayman Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr Highwayman

Hard I believe the woman's out of her senses What, Dorothy, don't you know *me* ?

Mrs Hard Mr Hardcastle, as I'm alive ! My fears blinded me But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home ? What has brought you to follow us ?

Hard Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits ? So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door ! (*To him*) This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue, you (*To her*) Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree ; and don't you remember the horse-pond, my dear ?

Mrs Hard Yes, I shall remember the horse-pond as long as I live, I have caught my death in it (*To TONY*) And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this ? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will

Tony Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't

Mrs Hard I'll spoil you, I will

[*Follows him off the stage* Exit

Hard There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit*

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Hast My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus ? If we delay a moment, all is lost for ever Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity

Miss Nev I find it impossible My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered, that I am unable to face any new danger Two or three years' patience will at last crown us with happiness

Hast Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy
Let us fly, my charmer Let us date our happiness from
this very moment, Perish fortune! Love and content
will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's
revenue Let me prevail!

Miss Nev No, Mr Hastings, no Prudence once
more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates
In the moment of passion fortune may be despised, but
it ever produces a lasting repentance I'm resolved to
apply to Mr Hardcastle's compassion and justice for
redress

Hast But though he had the will, he has not the power
to relieve you

Miss Nev But he has influence, and upon that I am
resolved to rely

Hast I have no hopes But since you persist, I
must reluctantly obey you [*Exeunt*]

SCENE changes

Enter SIR CHARLES and MISS HARDCASTLE

Sir Cha What a situation am I in! If what you say
appears, I shall then find a guilty son If what he says
be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most
wished for a daughter

Miss Hard I am proud of your approbation, and to
show I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed,
you shall hear his explicit declaration But he comes

Sir Cha I'll to your father, and keep him to the
appointment [*Exit* SIR CHARLES]

Enter MARLOW

Mar Though prepared for setting out, I come once
more to take leave, nor did I, till this moment, know
the pain I feel in the separation

Miss Hard (*In her own natural manner.*) I believe

these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by showing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

Mar (*Aside*) This girl every moment improves upon me. (*To her*) It must not be, madam, I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight, and nothing can restore me to myself but this painful effort of resolution.

Miss Hard Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit, I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

Enter HARDCASTLE and SIR CHARLES from behind

Sir Cha Here, behind this screen.

Hard Ay, ay, make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

Mar By heavens, madam! fortune was ever my smallest consideration. Your beauty at first caught my eye, for who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence and conscious virtue.

Sir Cha What can it mean? He amazes me!

Hard I told you how it would be. Hush!

Mar I am now determined to stay, madam, and I

have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation

Miss Hard No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you Do you think I could suffer a connection in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

Mar By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me! Nor shall I ever feel repentance but in not having seen your merits before I will stay even contrary to your wishes, and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct

Miss Hard Sir, I must entreat you'll desist As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference I might have given an hour or two to levity, but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connection where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

Mar (*Kneeling*) Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shows me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion Here let me continue——

Sir Cha I can hold it no longer Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

Hard Your cold contempt, your formal interview! What have you to say now?

Mar That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

Hard It means that you can say and unsay things at pleasure that you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter

Mar Daughter!—This lady your daughter?

Hard Yes, sir, my only daughter, my Kate, whose else should she be?

Mar Oh, the devil!

Miss Hard Yes, sir, that very identical tall squinting lady you were pleased to take me for (*curtseying*), she that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable Rattle of the Ladies' Club Ha! ha! ha!

Mar Zounds! there's no bearing this, it's worse than death!

Miss Hard In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy, or the loud confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning? Ha! ha! ha!

Mar O, curse on my noisy head I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down I must be gone

Hard By the hand of my body, but you shall not I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it You shall not, sir, I tell you I know she'll forgive you Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you Take courage, man (*They retire, she tormenting him, to the back scene*)

Enter MRS HARDCASTLE and TONY

Mrs Hard So, so, they're gone off Let them go, I care not

Hard Who gone?

Mrs Hard My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr Hastings, from town He who came down with our modest visitor here

Sir Cha Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice

Hard Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connection

Mrs Hard Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune, that remains in this family to console us for her loss

Hard Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary ?

Mrs Hard Ay, that's my affair, not yours

Hard But you know if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal

Mrs Hard Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal

Enter HASTINGS and MISS NEVILLE

Mrs Hard (*Aside*) What, returned so soon ! I begin not to like it

Hast (*To HARDCASTLE*) For my late attempt to fly off with your niece let my present confusion be my punishment We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity By her father's consent, I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty

Miss Nev Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression In an hour of levity, I was ready to give up my fortune to secure my choice But I am now recovered from the delusion, and hope from your tenderness what is denied me from a nearer connection

Mrs Hard Pshaw, pshaw ! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel

Hard Be it what it will, I'm glad they're come back to reclaim their due Come hither, Tony, boy Do you refuse this lady's hand whom I now offer you ?

Tony What signifies my refusing ? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father

Hard While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with

your mother's desire to keep it secret But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare you have been of age these three months

Tony Of age! Am I of age, father?

Hard Above three months

Tony Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty (*Taking MISS NEVILLE'S hand*) Witness all men by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, Esquire, of BLANK place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife So Constance Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again

Sir Cha O brave 'squire!

Hast My worthy friend!

Miss Hard My undutiful offspring!

Mar Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive, if you would return me the favour

Hast (*To MISS HARDCASTLE*) Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances I know you like him, I'm sure he loves you, and you must and shall have him

Hard (*Joining their hands*) And I say so too And, Mr Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain So now to supper To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the mistakes of the night shall be crowned with a merry morning So, boy, take her; and as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is, that you may never be mistaken in the wife

[*Exeunt Omnes*]

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS BULKLEY IN THE CHARACTER OF
MISS HARDCASTLE

WELL, having stooped to conquer with success,
And gained a husband without aid from dress,
Still, as a bar-maid, I could wish it too,
As I have conquered him to conquer you
And let me say, for all your resolution,
That pretty bar-maids have done execution
Our life is all a play, composed to please,
“ We have our exits and our entrances ”
The first act shows the simple country maid,
Harmless and young, of everything afraid ,
Blushes when hired, and with unmeaning action,
“ I hopes as how to give you satisfaction ”
Her second act displays a livelier scene—
The unblushing bar-maid of a country inn,
Who whisks about the house, at market caters,
Talks loud, coquets the guests, and scolds the waiters
Next the scene shifts to town, and there she soars,
The chop-house toast of ogling *connoisseurs*
On 'squires and cits she there displays her arts,
And on the gridiron broils her lovers' heart—
And as she smiles, her triumphs to complete,
E'en common-councilmen forget to eat
The fourth act shows her wedded to the 'squire,
And madam now begins to hold it higher ,
Pretends to taste, at operas cries caro !
And quits her Nancy Dawson, for Che Faro
Doats upon dancing, and in all her pride
Swims round the room, the Heinel of Cheapside
Ogles and leers with artificial skill,
Till, having lost in age the power to kill,
She sits all night at cards, and ogles at spadille. }

Such, through our lives the eventful history—
The fifth and last act still remains for me
The bar-maid now for your protection prays,
Turns female barrister, and pleads for Bayes

EPILOGUE

TO BE SPOKEN IN THE CHARACTER OF TONY LUMPKIN

BY J CRADOCK, ESQ

WELL—now all's ended—and my comrades gone,
Pray what becomes of "mother's nonly son" ?
A hopeful blade !—in town I'll fix my station,
And try to make a bluster in the nation ,
As for my cousin Neville, I renounce her,
Off—in a crack—I'll carry big Bet Bouncer

Why should not I in the great world appear ?
I soon shall have a thousand pounds a year !
No matter what a man may here inherit,
In London—'gad, they've some regard to spirit
I see the horses prancing up the streets,
And big Bet Bouncer bobs to all she meets ,
Then hoiks to jigs and pastimes ev'ry night—
Not to the plays—they say it a'n't polite ,
To Sadler's-Well perhaps, or operas go,
And once by chance, to the roratorio
Thus here and there, for ever up and down,
We'll set the fashions too to half the town ,
And then at auctions—money ne'er regard,
Buy pictures like the great, ten pounds a yard
Zounds, we shall make these London gentry say,
We know what's damned genteel as well as they.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

A COMEDY

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRE ROYAL,
COVENT GARDEN

[1768]

PREFACE

WHEN I undertook to write a comedy, I confess I was strongly prepossessed in favour of the poets of the last age, and strove to imitate them. The term "genteel comedy" was then unknown amongst us, and little more was desired by an audience than nature and humour, in whatever walks of life they were most conspicuous. The author of the following scenes never imagined that more would be expected of him, and therefore to delineate character has been his principal aim. Those who know anything of composition, are sensible that, in pursuing humour, it will sometimes lead us into the recesses of the mean, I was even tempted to look for it in the master of a spunging-house, but in deference to the public taste, grown of late, perhaps, too delicate, the scene of the bailiffs was retrenched in the representation. In deference also to the judgment of a few friends, who think in a particular way, the scene is here restored. The author submits it to the reader in his closet, and hopes that too much refinement will not banish humour and character from ours, as it has already done from the French theatre. Indeed, the French comedy is now become so very elevated and sentimental, that it has not only banished humour and Molière from the stage, but it has banished all spectators too.

Upon the whole, the author returns his thanks to the public for the favourable reception which *The Good-Natured Man* has met with, and to Mr. Colman in particular, for his kindness to it. It may not also be improper to assure any who shall hereafter write for the theatre, that merit, or supposed merit, will ever be a sufficient passport to his protection.

PROLOGUE

WRITTEN BY DR JOHNSON , SPOKEN BY MR BENSLEY

PRESSED by the load of life, the weary mind
Surveys the general toil of human kind ,
With cool submission joins the lab'ring train,
And social sorrow loses half its pain
Our anxious bard, without complaint, may share
This bustling season's epidemic care,
Like Cæsar's pilot, dignified by fate,
Tost in one common storm with all the great ,
Distrest alike, the statesman and the wit,
When one a borough courts, and one the pit,
The busy candidates for power and fame
Have hopes, and fears, and wishes, just the same ;
Disabled both to combat, or to fly,
Must hear all taunts, and hear without reply
Unchecked on both, loud rabbles vent their rage,
As mongrels bay the lion in a cage
Th' offended burgess hoards his angry tale
For that blest year when all that vote may rail ,
Their schemes of spite the poet's foes dismiss
Till that glad night when all that hate may hiss
" This day the powdered curls and golden coat,"
Says swelling Crispin, " begged a cobbler's vote "
" This night our wit," the pert apprentice cries,
" Lies at my feet—I hiss him, and he dies "
The great, 'tis true, can charm the electing tribe ;
The bard may supplicate, but cannot bribe
Yet judged by those whose voices ne'er were sold,
He feels no want of ill-persuading gold ,
But confident of praise, if praise be due,
Trusts without fear, to merit, and to you

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

MEN

MR HONEYWOOD	<i>Mr Powell</i>
CROAKER	<i>Mr Shute</i>
LOITY	<i>Mr Woodward</i>
SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD	<i>Mr Clarke</i>
LEONTINE	<i>Mr Bensley</i>
JARVIS	<i>Mr Dunstall</i>
BUTLER . .	<i>Mr Cushing</i>
BAILIFF	<i>Mr R Smith</i>
DUBARDIEL	<i>Mr Holtom</i>
POSTBOY	<i>Mr Quick</i>

WOMEN

MISS RICHLAND	<i>Mrs Bulkley</i>
OLIVIA	<i>Mrs Matlocks,</i>
MRS CROAKER	<i>Mrs Pitt</i>
GARNET	<i>Mrs Green</i>
LANDLADY	<i>Mrs White</i>

SCENE — *London*

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE—*An Apartment in Young HONEYWOOD'S House*

Enter SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD and JARVIS

Sir Wil Good Jarvis, make no apologies for this honest bluntness Fidelity, like yours, is the best excuse for every freedom

Jar I can't help being blunt, and being very angry too, when I hear you talk of disinheriting so good, so worthy a young gentleman as your nephew, my master All the world loves him

Sir Wil Say rather, that he loves all the world, that is his fault

Jar I am sure there is no part of it more dear to him than you are, though he has not seen you since he was a child

Sir Wil What signifies his affection to me, or how can I be proud of a place in a heart, where every sharper and coxcomb find an easy entrance?

Jar I grant you that he is rather too good-natured, that he's too much every man's man, that he laughs this minute with one, and cries the next with another. but whose instructions may he thank for all this?

Sir Wil Not mine, sure? My letters to him during

my employment in Italy taught him only that philosophy which might prevent, not defend his errors

Jar Faith, begging your honour's pardon, I'm sorry they taught him any philosophy at all, it has only served to spoil him This same philosophy is a good horse in the stable, but an arrant jade on a journey For my own part, whenever I hear him mention the name on't, I'm always sure he's going to play the fool

Sir Wil Don't let us ascribe his faults to his philosophy, I entreat you No, Jarvis, his good-nature arises rather from his fears of offending the importunate, than his desire of making the deserving happy

Jar What it rises from, I don't know But, to be sure, everybody has it, that asks it

Sir Wil Ay, or that does not ask it I have been now for some time a concealed spectator of his follies, and find them as boundless as his dissipation

Jar And yet, faith, he has some fine name or other for them all He calls his extravagance, generosity, and his trusting everybody, universal benevolence It was but last week he went security for a fellow whose face he scarce knew, and that he called an act of exalted mu—mu—munificence, ay, that was the name he gave it

Sir Wil And upon that I proceed, as my last effort, though with very little hopes to reclaim him That very fellow has just absconded, and I have taken up the security Now, my intention is to involve him in fictitious distress, before he has plunged himself into real calamity to arrest him for that very debt, to clap an officer upon him, and then let him see which of his friends will come to his relief

Jar. Well, if I could but any way see him thoroughly vexed, every groan of his would be music to me, yet, faith, I believe it impossible I have tried to fret him myself every morning these three years, but, instead of being angry, he sits as calmly to hear me scold, as he does to his hair-dresser

Sir Wil We must try him once more, however, and

I'll go this instant to put my scheme into execution and I don't despair of succeeding, as, by your means, I can have frequent opportunities of being about him without being known. What a pity it is, Jarvis, that any man's goodwill to others should produce so much neglect of himself, as to require correction! Yet we must touch his weaknesses with a delicate hand. There are some faults so nearly allied to excellence, that we can scarce weed out the vice without eradicating the virtue. [Exit]

Jar Well, go thy ways, Sir William Honeywood. It is not without reason that the world allows thee to be the best of men. But here comes his hopeful nephew, the strange, good-natured, foolish, open-hearted—And yet, all his faults are such that one loves him still the better for them.

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon Well, Jarvis, what messages from my friends this morning?

Jar You have no friends.

Hon Well, from my acquaintance then?

Jar (*Pulling out bills*) A few of our usual cards of compliment, that's all. This bill from your tailor, this from your mercer, and this from the little broker in Crooked Lane. He says he has been at a great deal of trouble to get back the money you borrowed.

Hon That I don't know, but I'm sure we were at a great deal of trouble in getting him to lend it.

Jar He has lost all patience.

Hon Then he has lost a very good thing.

Jar There's that ten guineas you were sending to the poor gentleman and his children in the Fleet. I believe that would stop his mouth for a while at least.

Hon Ay, Jarvis, but what will fill their mouths in the meantime? Must I be cruel, because he happens to be importunate, and, to relieve his avarice, leave them to insupportable distress?

Jar 'Sdeath ! Sir, the question now is how to relieve yourself, yourself—Haven't I reason to be out of my senses, when I see things going at sixes and sevens ?

Hon Whatever reason you may have for being out of your senses, I hope you'll allow that I'm not quite unreasonable for continuing in mine

Jar You are the only man alive in your present situation that could do so. Everything upon the waste. There's Miss Richland and her fine fortune gone already, and upon the point of being given to your rival——

Hon I'm no man's rival

Jar Your uncle in Italy preparing to disinherit you ; your own fortune almost spent, and nothing but pressing creditors, false friends, and a pack of drunken servants that your kindness has made unfit for any other family

Hon Then they have the more occasion for being in mine

Jar Soh ! What will you have done with him that I caught stealing your plate in the pantry ? In the fact, I caught him in the fact

Hon In the fact ? If so, I really think that we should pay him his wages and turn him off

Jar He shall be turned off at Tyburn, the dog, we'll hang him, if it be only to frighten the rest of the family

Hon No, Jarvis, it's enough that we have lost what he has stolen, let us not add to it the loss of a fellow-creature !

Jar Very fine ! well, here was the footman just now, to complain of the butler—he says he does most work, and ought to have most wages

Hon That's but just, though perhaps here comes the butler to complain of the footman

Jar Ay, it's the way with them all, from the scullion to the privy-councillor. If they have a bad master, they keep quarrelling with him, if they have a good master, they keep quarrelling with one another

Enter BUTLER, drunk

But Sir, I'll not stay in the family with Jonathan ; you must part with him, or part with me , that's the ex—ex—exposition of the matter, sir

Hon Full and explicit enough But what's his fault, good Philip ?

But Sir, he's given to drinking, sir, and I shall have my morals corrupted by keeping such company

Hon Ha ! ha ! he has such a diverting way——

Jar Oh, quite amusing

But I find my wine's a-going, sir , and liquors don't go without mouths, sir , I hate a drunkard, sir

Hon Well, well, Philip, I'll hear you upon that another time , so go to bed now

Jar To bed ! let him go to the devil

But Begging your honour's pardon, and begging your pardon, master Jarvis, I'll not go to bed, nor to the devil neither I have enough to do to mind my cellar I forgot, your honour, Mr Croaker is below I came on purpose to tell you

Hon Why didn't you show him up, blockhead ?

But Show him up, sir ! With all my heart, sir Up or down, all's one to me

[*Exit*]

Jar Ay, we have one or other of that family in this house from morning till night He comes on the old affair, I suppose The match between his son that's just returned from Paris, and Miss Richland, the young lady he's guardian to

Hon Perhaps so Mr Croaker, knowing my friendship for the young lady, has got it into his head that I can persuade her to what I please

Jar Ah ! if you loved yourself but half as well as she loves you, we should soon see a marriage that would set all things to rights again

Hon Love me ! Sure, Jarvis, you dream No, no , her intimacy with me never amounted to more than mere friendship—mere friendship That she is the most

lovely woman that ever warmed the human heart with desire, I own But never let me harbour a thought of making her unhappy, by a connection with one so unworthy her merits as I am No, Jarvis, it shall be my study to serve her, even in spite of my wishes, and to secure her happiness, though it destroys my own

Jar Was ever the like? I want patience

Hon Besides, Jarvis, though I could obtain Miss Richland's consent, do you think I could succeed with her guardian, or Mrs Croaker, his wife, who, though both very fine in their way, are yet a little opposite in their dispositions, you know?

Jar Opposite enough, Heaven knows! the very reverse of each other she, all laugh and no joke, he, always complaining and never sorrowful, a fretful poor soul, that has a new distress for every hour in the four-and-twenty——

Hon Hush, hush, he's coming up, he'll hear you

Jar One whose voice is a passing-bell——

Hon Well, well, go, do

Jar A raven that bodes nothing but mischief, a coffin and cross-bones, a bundle of rue, a sprig of deadly night-shade, a—(HONEYWOOD, *stopping his mouth, at last pushes him off*) [Exit JARVIS]

Hon I must own, my old monitor is not entirely wrong There is something in my friend Croaker's conversation that entirely depresses me. His very mirth is quite an antidote to all gaiety, and his appearance has a stronger effect on my spirits than an undertaker's shop—Mr Croaker, this is such a satisfaction——

Enter CROAKER

Cro A pleasant morning to Mr Honeywood, and many of them How is this! you look most shockingly to-day, my dear friend I hope this weather does not affect your spirits To be sure, if this weather continues—I say nothing—But God send we be all better this day three months!

Hon I heartily concur in the wish, though, I own, not in your apprehensions

Cro Maybe not Indeed, what signifies what weather we have in a country going to ruin like ours? Taxes rising and trade falling Money flying out of the kingdom, and Jesuits swarming into it I know at this time no less than a hundred and twenty-seven Jesuits between Charing Cross and Temple Bar

Hon The Jesuits will scarce pervert you or me, I should hope

Cro Maybe not Indeed, what signifies whom they pervert in a country that has scarce any religion to lose? I'm only afraid for our wives and daughters

Hon I have no apprehensions for the ladies, I assure you

Cro Maybe not Indeed, what signifies whether they be perverted or no? The women in my time were good for something I have seen a lady drest from top to toe in her own manufactures formerly But nowadays the devil a thing of their own manufacture's about them, except their faces

Hon But, however these faults may be practised abroad, you don't find them at home, either with Mrs Croaker, Olivia, or Miss Richland

Cro The best of them will never be canonized for a saint when she's dead By the bye, my dear friend, I don't find this match between Miss Richland and my son much relished, either by one side or t'other

Hon I thought otherwise.

Cro Ah, Mr Honeywood, a little of your fine serious advice to the young lady might go far: I know she has a very exalted opinion of your understanding

Hon But would not that be usurping an authority that more properly belongs to yourself?

Cro My dear friend, you know but little of my authority at home People think, indeed, because they see me come out in a morning thus, with a pleasant face, and to make my friends merry, that all's well within

But I have cares that would break a heart of stone My wife has so encroached upon every one of my privileges, that I'm now no more than a mere lodger in my own house

Hon But a little spirit exerted on your side might perhaps restore your authority

Cro No, though I had the spirit of a lion! I do rouse sometimes But what then? always haggling and haggling A man is tired of getting the better before his wife is tired of losing the victory

Hon It's a melancholy consideration indeed, that our chief comforts often produce our greatest anxieties, and that an increase of our possessions is but an inlet to new disquietudes

Cro Ah, my dear friend, these were the very words of poor Dick Doleful to me not a week before he made away with himself Indeed, Mr Honeywood, I never see you but you put me in mind of poor Dick Ah, there was merit neglected for you! and so true a friend! we loved each other for thirty years, and yet he never asked me to lend him a single farthing

Hon Pray what could induce him to commit so rash an action at last?

Cro I don't know some people were malicious enough to say it was keeping company with me, because we used to meet now and then and open our hearts to each other To be sure I loved to hear him talk, and he loved to hear me talk, poor dear Dick! He used to say that Croaker rhymed to joker, and so we used to laugh—Poor Dick! [Going to cry]

Hon His fate affects me

Cro Ah, he grew sick of this miserable life, where we do nothing but eat and grow hungry, dress and undress, get up and lie down, while reason, that should watch like a nurse by our side, falls as fast asleep as we do

Hon To say a truth, if we compare that part of life which is to come, by that which we have passed, the prospect is hideous

Cro Life at the greatest and best is but a froward child, that must be humoured and coaxed a little till it falls asleep, and then all the care is over

Hon Very true, sir, nothing can exceed the vanity of our existence, but the folly of our pursuits. We wept when we came into the world, and every day tells us why

Cro Ah, my dear friend, it is a perfect satisfaction to be miserable with you. My son Leontine shan't lose the benefit of such fine conversation. I'll just step home for him. I am willing to show him so much seriousness in one scarce older than himself. And what if I bring my last letter to the *Gazetteer* on the increase and progress of earthquakes? It will amuse us, I promise you. I there prove how the late earthquake is coming round to pay us another visit, from London to Lisbon, from Lisbon to the Canary Islands, from the Canary Islands to Palmyra, from Palmyra to Constantinople, and so from Constantinople back to London again. [Exit]

Hon Poor Croaker! his situation deserves the utmost pity. I shall scarce recover my spirits these three days. Sure, to live upon such terms is worse than death itself! And yet, when I consider my own situation,—a broken fortune, a hopeless passion, friends in distress, the wish but not the power to serve them—(pausing and sighing)

Enter BUTLER

But More company below, sir, Mrs Croaker and Miss Richland shall I show them up? but they're showing up themselves. [Exit]

Enter MRS CROAKER and MISS RICHLAND

Miss Rich You're always in such spirits

Mrs Cro We have just come, my dear Honeywood, from the auction. There was the old deaf dowager, as usual, bidding like a fury against herself. And then so

curious in antiques ! herself the most genuine piece of antiquity in the whole collection

Hon Excuse me, ladies, if some uneasiness from friendship makes me unfit to share in this good-humour I know you'll pardon me

Mrs Cro I vow he seems as melancholy as if he had taken a dose of my husband this morning Well, if Richland here can pardon you, I must

Miss Rich You would seem to insinuate, madam, that I have particular reasons for being disposed to refuse it

Mrs Cro Whatever I insinuate, my dear, don't be so ready to wish an explanation

Miss Rich I own I should be sorry Mr Honeywood's long friendship and mine should be misunderstood

Hon There's no answering for others, madam But I hope you'll never find me presuming to offer more than the most delicate friendship may readily allow

Miss Rich And I shall be prouder of such a tribute from you, than the most passionate professions from others

Hon My own sentiments, madam friendship is a disinterested commerce between equals , love, an abject intercourse between tyrants and slaves

Miss Rich And, without a compliment, I know none more disinterested, or more capable of friendship, than Mr Honeywood

Mrs Cro And, indeed, I know nobody that has more friends, at least among the ladies Miss Fruzz, Miss Oddbody, and Miss Winterbottom, praise him in all companies As for Miss Biddy Bundle, she's his professed admirer

Miss Rich Indeed ! an admirer ! I did not know, sir, you were such a favourite there But is she seriously so handsome ? Is she the mighty thing talked of ?

Hon. The town, madam, seldom begins to praise a lady's beauty, till she's beginning to lose it—(smiling)

Mrs Cro But she's resolved never to lose it, it seems ,

for, as her natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one Well, nothing diverts me more than one of these fine, old, dressy things, who thinks to conceal her age, by everywhere exposing her person, sticking herself up in the front of a side-box, trailing through a minuet at Almack's, and then, in the public gardens, looking for all the world like one of the painted ruins of the place

Hon Every age has its admirers, ladies While you, perhaps, are trading among the warmer climates of youth, there ought to be some to carry on a useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

Miss Rich. But, then, the mortifications they must suffer before they can be fitted out for traffic I have seen one of them fret a whole morning at her hair-dresser, when all the fault was her face

Hon And yet, I'll engage, has carried that face at last to a very good market This good-natured town, madam, has husbands, like spectacles, to fit every age, from fifteen to fourscore

Mrs Cro Well, you're a dear, good-natured creature But you know you're engaged with us this morning upon a strolling party I want to show Olivia the town, and the things, I believe I shall have business for you for the whole day.

Hon I am sorry, madam, I have an appointment with Mr. Croaker, which it is impossible to put off

Mrs Cro What! with my husband? Then I'm resolved to take no refusal Nay, I protest you must You know I never laugh so much as with you

Hon Why, if I must, I must I'll swear you have put me into such spirits Well, do you find jest, and I'll find laugh, I promise you We'll wait for the chariot in the next room [Exeunt

Enter LEONTINE and OLIVIA

Leon There they go, thoughtless and happy My dearest Olivia, what would I give to see you capable

of sharing in their amusements, and as cheerful as they are !

Oliv How, my Leontine, how can I be cheerful, when I have so many terrors to oppress me ? The fear of being detected by this family, and the apprehensions of a censuring world, when I must be detected——

Leon The world, my love ! what can it say ? At worst it can only say that, being compelled by a mercenary guardian to embrace a life you disliked, you formed a resolution of flying with the man of your choice, that you confided in his honour, and took refuge in my father's house, the only one where yours could remain without censure

Oliv. But consider, Leontine, your disobedience and my indiscretion, your being sent to France to bring home a sister, and, instead of a sister, bringing home——

Leon One dearer than a thousand sisters One that I am convinced will be equally dear to the rest of the family, when she comes to be known

Oliv And that, I fear, will shortly be

Leon Impossible, till we ourselves think proper to make the discovery My sister, you know, has been with her aunt, at Lyons, since she was a child, and you find every creature in the family takes you for her

Oliv But mayn't she write, mayn't her aunt write ?

Leon Her aunt scarce ever writes, and all my sister's letters are directed to me

Oliv. But won't your refusing Miss Richland, for whom you know the old gentleman intends you, create a suspicion ?

Leon There, there's my master-stroke I have resolved not to refuse her, nay, an hour hence I have consented to go with my father to make her an offer of my heart and fortune

Oliv Your heart and fortune !

Leon Don't be alarmed, my dearest Can Olivia think so meanly of my honour or my love, as to suppose I could ever hope for happiness from any but her ? No,

my Olivia, neither the force, nor, permit me to add, the delicacy of my passion, leaves any room to suspect me. I only offer Miss Richland a heart I am convinced she will refuse, as I am confident that, without knowing it, her affections are fixed upon Mr Honeywood.

Oliv Mr Honeywood! You'll excuse my apprehensions, but when your merits come to be put in the balance——

Leon You view them with too much partiality. However, by making this offer, I show a seeming compliance with my father's command, and, perhaps, upon her refusal, I may have his consent to choose for myself.

Oliv Well, I submit. And yet, my Leontine, I own I shall envy her even your pretended addresses. I consider every look, every expression of your esteem, as due only to me. This is folly, perhaps I allow it, but it is natural to suppose, that merit which has made an impression on one's own heart, may be powerful over that of another.

Leon Don't, my life's treasure, don't let us make imaginary evils, when you know we have so many real ones to encounter. At worst, you know, if Miss Richland should consent, or my father refuse his pardon, it can but end in a trip to Scotland, and——

Enter CROAKER

Cro Where have you been, boy? I have been seeking you. My friend Honeywood here has been saying such comfortable things. Ah! he's an example indeed. Where is he? I left him here.

Leon Sir, I believe you may see him, and hear him too, in the next room; he's preparing to go out with the ladies.

Cro Good gracious! can I believe my eyes or my ears! I'm struck dumb with his vivacity, and stunned with the loudness of his laugh. Was there ever such a transformation! (*A laugh behind the scenes*) CROAKER

mimics it) Ha! ha! ha! there it goes a plague take their balderdash! Yet I could expect nothing less, when my precious wife was of the party On my conscience, I believe she could spread a horse-laugh through the pews of a tabernacle

Leon Since you find so many objections to a wife, sir, how can you be so earnest in recommending one to me?

Cro I have told you, and tell you again, boy, that Miss Richland's fortune must not go out of the family, one may find comfort in the money, whatever one does in the wife

Leon But, sir, though, in obedience to your desire, I am ready to marry her, it may be possible she has no inclination to me

Cro I'll tell you once for all how it stands A good part of Miss Richland's large fortune consists in a claim upon Government, which my good friend, Mr Lofty, assures me the Treasury will allow One half of this she is to forfeit, by her father's will, in case she refuses to marry you So, if she rejects you, we seize half her fortune, if she accepts you, we seize the whole, and a fine girl into the bargain

Leon But, sir, if you will but listen to reason——

Cro Come, then, produce your reasons I tell you, I'm fixed, determined, so now produce your reasons When I'm determined, I always listen to reason, because it can then do no harm

Leon You have alleged that a mutual choice was the first requisite in matrimonial happiness

Cro Well, and you have both of you a mutual choice She has her choice—to marry you, or lose half her fortune, and you have your choice—to marry her, or pack out of doors without any fortune at all

Leon An only son, sir, might expect more indulgence

Cro An only father, sir, might expect more obedience besides, has not your sister here, that never disobliged me in her life, as good a right as you? He's a sad dog, Livy, my dear, and would take all from you But he

shan't, I tell you he shan't, for you shall have your share

Olw Dear sir, I wish you'd be convinced, that I can never be happy in any addition to my fortune which is taken from his

Cro Well, well, it's a good child, so say no more but come with me, and we shall see something that will give us a great deal of pleasure, I promise you, old Ruggins, the curry-comb maker, lying in state I am told he makes a very handsome corpse, and becomes his coffin prodigiously He was an intimate friend of mine, and these are friendly things we ought to do for each other

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE—CROAKER'S *House*

MISS RICHLAND *and* GARNET

Miss Rich Olivia not his sister ? Olivia not Leontine's sister ? You amaze me !

Gar No more his sister than I am , I had it all from his own servant I can get anything from that quarter

Miss Rich But how ? Tell me again, Garnet

Gar Why, madam, as I told you before, instead of going to Lyons to bring home his sister, who has been there with her aunt these ten years, he never went farther than Paris there he saw and fell in love with this young lady—by the bye, of a prodigious family

Miss Rich And brought her home to my guardian as his daughter ?

Gar Yes, and daughter she will be If he don't consent to their marriage, they talk of trying what a Scotch parson can do

Miss Rich Well, I own they have deceived me—And so demurely as Olivia carried it too !—Would you believe it, Garnet, I told her all my secrets , and yet the sly cheat concealed all this from me ?

Gar And, upon my word, madam, I don't much blame her she was loth to trust one with her secrets, that was so very bad at keeping her own

Miss Rich But, to add to their deceit, the young gentleman, it seems, pretends to make me serious proposals My guardian and he are to be here presently, to

open the affair in form You know I am to lose half my fortune if I refuse him

Gar Yet, what can you do ? For being, as you are, in love with Mr Honeywood, madam——

Miss Rich How ! idiot, what do you mean ? In love with Mr Honeywood ! Is this to provoke me ?

Gar That is, madam, in friendship with him , I meant nothing more than friendship, as I hope to be married , nothing more

Miss Rich Well, no more of this As to my guardian and his son, they shall find me prepared to receive them . I'm resolved to accept their proposal with seeming pleasure, to mortify them by compliance, and so throw the refusal at last upon them

Gar Delicious ! and that will secure your whole fortune to yourself Well, who could have thought so innocent a face could cover so much 'cuteness !

Miss Rich Why, girl, I only oppose my prudence to their cunning, and practise a lesson they have taught me against themselves

Gar Then you're likely not long to want employment, for here they come, and in close conference

Enter CROAKER and LEONTINE

Leon Excuse me, sir, if I seem to hesitate upon the point of putting to the lady so important a question

Cro Lord ! good sir, moderate your fears , you're so plaguy shy, that one would think you had changed sexes I tell you we must have the half or the whole Come, let me see with what spirit you begin. Well, why don't you ? Eh ! what ? Well, then—I must, it seems—Miss Richland, my dear, I believe you guess at our business , an affair which my son here comes to open, that nearly concerns your happiness

Miss Rich Sir, I should be ungrateful not to be pleased with anything that comes recommended by you.

Cro How, boy, could you desire a finer opening ? Why don't you begin, I say ?

[*To LEONTINE.*

Leon 'Tis true, madam, my father, madam, has some intentions—hem—of explaining an affair—which—himself—can best explain, madam

Cro Yes, my dear, it comes entirely from my son, it's all a request of his own, madam And I will permit him to make the best of it

Leon The whole affair is only this, madam, my father has a proposal to make, which he insists none but himself shall deliver

Cro My mind misgives me, the fellow will never be brought on (*aside*) In short, madam, you see before you one that loves you, one whose whole happiness is all in you

Miss Rich I never had any doubts of your regard, sir, and I hope you can have none of my duty

Cro That's not the thing, my little sweeting, my love! No, no, another-guess lover than I there he stands, madam, his very looks declare the force of his passion—Call up a look, you dog! (*aside*)—But then, had you seen him, as I have, weeping, speaking soliloquies and blank verse, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absent

Miss Rich I fear, sir, he's absent now, or such a declaration would have come most properly from himself

Cro Himself, madam! he would die before he could make such a confession, and if he had not a channel for his passion through me, it would ere now have drowned his understanding

Miss Rich I must grant, sir, there are attractions in modest diffidence above the force of words A silent address is the genuine eloquence of sincerity

Cro Madam, he has forgot to speak any other language, silence is become his mother-tongue

Miss Rich. And it must be confessed, sir, it speaks very powerfully in his favour And yet I shall be thought too forward in making such a confession; shan't I, Mr. Leontine?

Leon Confusion ! my reserve will undo me But, if modesty attracts her, impudence may disgust her I'll try (*aside*) Don't imagine from my silence, madam, that I want a due sense of the honour and happiness intended me. My father, madam, tells me, your humble servant is not totally indifferent to you—he admires you I adore you, and when we come together, upon my soul I believe we shall be the happiest couple in all St James's

Miss Rich If I could flatter myself you thought as you speak, sir——

Leon Doubt my sincerity, madam ? By your dear self I swear Ask the brave if they desire glory ? ask cowards if they covet safety——

Cro Well, well, no more questions about it

Leon Ask the sick if they long for health ? ask misers if they love money ? ask——

Cro Ask a fool if he can talk nonsense ! What's come over the boy ? What signifies asking, when there's not a soul to give you an answer ? If you would ask to the purpose, ask this lady's consent to make you happy

Miss Rich Why indeed, sir, his uncommon ardour almost compels me—forces me to comply And yet I'm afraid he'll despise a conquest gained with too much ease, won't you, Mr Leontine ?

Leon. Confusion ! (*aside*) Oh, by no means, madam, by no means And yet, madam, you talked of force There is nothing I would avoid so much as compulsion in a thing of this kind No, madam, I will still be generous, and leave you at liberty to refuse

Cro But I tell you, sir, the lady is not at liberty It's a match You see she says nothing Silence gives consent

Leon But, sir, she talked of force Consider, sir, the cruelty of constraining her inclinations

Cro But I say there's no cruelty Don't you know, blockhead, that girls have always a roundabout way of saying yes before company ? So get you both gone

together into the next room, and hang him that interrupts the tender explanation Get you gone, I say, I'll not hear a word

Leon But, sir, I must beg leave to insist—

Cro Get off, you puppy, or I'll beg leave to insist upon knocking you down Stupid whelp! But I don't wonder the boy takes entirely after his mother

[*Exeunt* MISS RICHLAND and LEONTINE

Enter MRS CROAKER

Mrs Cro Mr Croaker, I bring you something, my dear, that I believe will make you smile

Cro I'll hold you a guinea of that, my dear

Mrs Cro A letter, and, as I knew the hand, I ventured to open it

Cro. And how can you expect your breaking open my letters should give me pleasure?

Mrs Cro Poo! it's from your sister at Lyons, and contains good news, read it

Cro What a Frenchified cover is here! That sister of mine has some good qualities, but I could never teach her to fold a letter

Mrs Cro Fold a fiddlestick! Read what it contains.

CROAKER, *reading*

“DEAR NICK,—An English gentleman, of large fortune, has for some time made private, though honourable proposals to your daughter Olivia They love each other tenderly, and I find she has consented, without letting any of the family know, to crown his addresses As such good offers don't come every day, your own good sense, his large fortune, and family considerations, will induce you to forgive her—Yours ever,

“RACHAEL CROAKER”

My daughter Olivia privately contracted to a man of large fortune! This is good news, indeed My heart never foretold me of this And yet, how shily the little bag-

gage has carried it since she came home, not a word on't to the old ones for the world Yet I thought I saw something she wanted to conceal

Mrs Cro Well, if they have concealed their amour, they shan't conceal their wedding, that shall be public, I'm resolved

Cro I tell thee, woman, the wedding is the most foolish part of the ceremony I can never get this woman to think of the most serious part of the nuptial engagement

Mrs Cro What would you have me think of, their funeral? But come, tell me, my dear, don't you owe more to me than you care to confess? Would you have ever been known to Mr Lofty, who has undertaken Miss Richland's claim at the Treasury, but for me? Who was it first made him an acquaintance at Lady Shabbaroon's rout? Who got him to promise us his interest? Is not he a backstairs favourite, one that can do what he pleases with those that do what they please? Is not he an acquaintance that all your groaning and lamentation could never have got us?

Cro He is a man of importance, I grant you And yet what amazes me is, that, while he is giving away places to all the world, he can't get one for himself

Mrs Cro That perhaps may be owing to his nicety. Great men are not easily satisfied

Enter French Servant

Ser An expresse from Monsieur Lofty He vil be vait upon your honours instamment. He be only giving four five instruction, read two tree memorial, call upon von ambassadeur He vil be vid you in one tree minutes

Mrs Cro You see now, my dear What an extensive department! Well, friend, let your master know, that we are extremely honoured by this honour Was there anything ever in a higher style of breeding? All mes-sages among the great are now done by express.

Cro To be sure, no man does little things with more solemnity, or claims more respect than he. But he's in the right on't. In our bad world, respect is given where respect is claimed.

Mrs Cro Never mind the world, my dear, you were never in a pleasanter place in your life. Let us now think of receiving him with proper respect—(*A loud rapping at the door*),—and there he is, by the thundering rap.

Cro Ay, verily, there he is! as close upon the heels of his own express, as an endorsement upon the back of a bill. Well, I'll leave you to receive him, whilst I go to chide my little Olivia for intending to steal a marriage without mine or her aunt's consent. I must seem to be angry, or she too may begin to despise my authority.

[*Exit*]

Enter LOFTY, speaking to his Servant

Lof "And if the Venetian ambassador, or that teasing creature the Marquis, should call, I'm not at home. Dam'me, I'll be pack-horse to none of them." My dear madam, I have just snatched a moment—"And if the expresses to his grace be ready, let them be sent off, they're of importance"—Madam, I ask a thousand pardons.

Mrs Cro. Sir, this honour——

Lof "And, Dubardieu! if the person calls about the commission, let him know that it is made out. As for Lord Cumbercourt's stale request, it can keep cold you understand me"—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons.

Mrs Cro. Sir, this honour——

Lof "And, Dubardieu! if the man comes from the Cornish borough, you must do him, you must do him, I say."—Madam, I ask ten thousand pardons—"And if the Russian ambassador calls; but he will scarce call to-day, I believe"—And now, madam, I have just got time to express my happiness in having the honour of

being permitted to profess myself your most obedient, humble servant

Mrs Cro Sir, the happiness and honour are all mine ; and yet, I'm only robbing the public while I detain you

Lof Sink the public, madam, when the fair are to be attended Ah, could all my hours be so charmingly devoted ! Sincerely, don't you pity us poor creatures in affairs ? Thus it is eternally , solicited for places here, teased for pensions there, and courted everywhere I know you pity me Yes, I see you do

Mrs Cro Excuse me, sir, "Toils of empires pleasures are," as Waller says

Lof Waller, Waller, is he of the house ?

Mrs Cro The modern poet of that name, sir

Lof Oh, a modern ! We men of business despise the moderns , and as for the ancients, we have no time to read them Poetry is a pretty thing enough for our wives and daughters , but not for us Why now, here I stand that know nothing of books I say, madam, I know nothing of books , and yet, I believe, upon a land-carriage fishery, a stamp act, or a jag-hire, I can talk my two hours without feeling the want of them

Mrs Cro The world is no stranger to Mr Lofty's eminence in every capacity

Lof I vow to gad, madam, you make me blush. I'm nothing, nothing, nothing in the world , a mere obscure gentleman To be sure, indeed, one or two of the present ministers are pleased to represent me as a formidable man I know they are pleased to bespatter me at all their little dirty levees Yet, upon my soul, I wonder what they see in me to treat me so ! Measures, not men, have always been my mark , and I vow, by all that's honourable, my resentment has never done the men, as mere men, any manner of harm—that is, as mere men

Mrs Cro What importance, and yet what modesty !

Lof Oh, if you talk of modesty, madam, there, I own, I'm accessible to praise modesty is my foible . it was

so the Duke of Brentford used to say of me "I love Jack Lofty," he used to say "no man has a finer knowledge of things, quite a man of information, and when he speaks upon his legs, by the Lord he's prodigious, he scouts them, and yet all men have their faults, too much modesty is his," says his grace

Mrs Cro And yet, I dare say, you don't want assurance when you come to solicit for your friends

Lof Oh, there indeed I'm in bronze Apropos! I have just been mentioning Miss Richland's case to a certain personage, we must name no names When I ask, I am not to be put off, madam No, no, I take my friend by the button A fine girl, sir, great justice in her case A friend of mine—borough interest—business must be done, Mr Secretary—I say, Mr Secretary, her business must be done, sir That's my way, madam

Mrs Cro Bless me! you said all this to the Secretary of State, did you?

Lof I did not say the Secretary, did I? Well, curse it, since you have found me out, I will not deny it It was to the Secretary

Mrs Cro This was going to the fountain-head at once, not applying to the understrappers, as Mr Honeywood would have had us

Lof Honeywood! he! he! He was, indeed, a fine solicitor I suppose you have heard what has just happened to him?

Mrs Cro Poor dear man! no accident, I hope?

Lof Undone, madam, that's all His creditors have taken him into custody. A prisoner in his own house

Mrs Cro A prisoner in his own house? How! At this very time? I'm quite unhappy for him

Lof Why, so am I The man, to be sure, was immensely good-natured But then I could never find that he had anything in him

Mrs Cro His manner, to be sure, was excessively

harmless, some, indeed, thought it a little dull For my part, I always concealed my opinion

Lof It can't be concealed, madam, the man was dull, dull as the last new comedy! a poor impracticable creature! I tried once or twice to know if he was fit for business, but he had scarce talents to be groom-porter to an orange-barrow

Mrs Cro How differently does Miss Richland think of him! for, I believe, with all his faults, she loves him

Lof Loves him! Does she? You should cure her of that by all means Let me see, what if she were sent to him this instant, in his present doleful situation? My life for it, that works her cure Distress is a perfect antidote to love Suppose we join her in the next room? Miss Richland is a fine girl, has a fine fortune, and must not be thrown away Upon my honour, madam, I have a regard for Miss Richland, and rather than she should be thrown away, I should think it no indignity to marry her myself [*Exeunt*]

Enter OLIVIA and LEONTINE

Leon And yet, trust me, Olivia, I had every reason to expect Miss Richland's refusal, as I did everything in my power to deserve it Her indelicacy surprises me

Olv Sure, Leontine, there's nothing so indelicate in being sensible of your merit If so, I fear I shall be the most guilty thing alive

Leon But you mistake, my dear The same attention I used to advance my merit with you, I practised to lessen it with her. What more could I do?

Olv Let us now rather consider what is to be done We have both dissembled too long—I have always been ashamed—I am now quite weary of it. Sure I could never have undergone so much for any other but you

Leon And you shall find my gratitude equal to your
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kindest compliance Though our friends should totally forsake us, Olivia, we can draw upon content for the deficiencies of fortune

Olv Then why should we defer our scheme of humble happiness, when it is now in our power? I may be the favourite of your father, it is true, but can it ever be thought, that his present kindness to a supposed child will continue to a known deceiver?

Leon I have many reasons to believe it will As his attachments are but few, they are lasting His own marriage was a private one, as ours may be Besides, I have sounded him already at a distance, and find all his answers exactly to our wish Nay, by an expression or two that dropped from him, I am induced to think he knows of this affair.

Olv Indeed! But that would be a happiness too great to be expected

Leon However it be, I'm certain you have power over him, and I am persuaded, if you informed him of our situation, that he would be disposed to pardon it

Olv You had equal expectations, Leontine, from your last scheme with Miss Richland, which you find has succeeded most wretchedly

Leon And that's the best reason for trying another.

Olv If it must be so, I submit

Leon. As we could wish, he comes this way. Now, my dearest Olivia, be resolute I'll just retire within hearing, to come in at a proper time, either to share your danger, or confirm your victory [Exit

Enter CROAKER.

Cro Yes, I must forgive her, and yet not too easily, neither. It will be proper to keep up the decorums of resentment a little, if it be only to impress her with an idea of my authority

Olv. How I tremble to approach him!—Might I presume, sir,—if I interrupt you—

Cro No, child, where I have an affection, it is not a little thing that can interrupt me Affection gets over little things

Olv Sir, you're too kind I'm sensible how ill I deserve this partiality Yet, Heaven knows, there is nothing I would not do to gain it

Cro And you have but too well succeeded, you little hussy, you! With those endearing ways of yours, on my conscience, I could be brought to forgive anything, unless it were a very great offence indeed

Olv But mine is such an offence—When you know my guilt—Yes, you shall know it, though I feel the greatest pain in the confession

Cro Why, then, if it be so very great a pain, you may spare yourself the trouble, for I know every syllable of the matter before you begin

Olv Indeed! then I'm undone

Cro Ay, miss, you wanted to steal a match, without letting me know it, did you? But I'm not worth being consulted, I suppose, when there's to be a marriage in my own family No, I'm nobody I'm to be a mere article of family lumber, a piece of cracked china to be stuck up in a corner

Olv Dear sir, nothing but the dread of your authority could induce us to conceal it from you

Cro No, no, my consequence is no more, I'm as little minded as a dead Russian in winter, just stuck up with a pipe in its mouth till there comes a thaw—It goes to my heart to vex her (*aside*)

Olv. I was prepared, sir, for your anger, and despaired of pardon, even while I presumed to ask it But your severity shall never abate my affection, as my punishment is but justice

Cro And yet you should not despair neither, Livy We ought to hope all for the best

Olv And do you permit me to hope, sir? Can I ever expect to be forgiven? But hope has too long deceived me.

Cro Why then, child, it shan't deceive you now, for I forgive you this very moment, I forgive you all, and now you are indeed my daughter

Olw O transport! this kindness overpowers me

Cro I was always against severity to our children. We have been young and giddy ourselves, and we can't expect boys and girls to be old before their time

Olw What generosity! but can you forget the many falsehoods, the dissimulation—

Cro You did indeed dissemble, you urchin, you, but where's the girl that won't dissemble for a husband? My wife and I had never been married, if we had not dissembled a little beforehand

Olw It shall be my future care never to put such generosity to a second trial. And as for the partner of my offence and folly, from his native honour, and the just sense he has of his duty, I can answer for him that—

Enter LEONTINE

Leon Permit him thus to answer for himself (*kneeling*) Thus, sir, let me speak my gratitude for this unmerited forgiveness. Yes, sir, this even exceeds all your former tenderness. I now can boast the most indulgent of fathers. The life he gave, compared to this, was but a trifling blessing

Cro. And, good sir, who sent for you, with that fine tragedy face, and flourishing manner? I don't know what we have to do with your gratitude upon this occasion.

Leon How, sir! Is it possible to be silent, when so much obliged? Would you refuse me the pleasure of being grateful? of adding my thanks to my Olivia's? of sharing in the transports that you have thus occasioned?

Cro Lord, sir, we can be happy enough without your coming in to make up the party. I don't know what's

the matter with the boy all this day, he has got into such a rhodomontade manner all this morning!

Leon But, sir, I that have so large a part in the benefit, is it not my duty to show my joy? is the being admitted to your favour so slight an obligation? is the happiness of marrying my Olivia so small a blessing?

Cro Marrying Olivia! marrying Olivia! marrying his own sister! Sure the boy is out of his senses! His own sister!

Leon My sister!

Olv Sister! How have I been mistaken! (*Aside*)

Leon Some cursed mistake in all this, I find! (*Aside*)

Cro What does the booby mean? or has he any meaning? Eh, what do you mean, you blockhead, you?

Leon Mean, sir—why, sir—only, when my sister is to be married, that I have the pleasure of marrying her, sir, that is, of giving her away, sir—I have made a point of it

Cro Oh, is that all? Give her away. You have made a point of it. Then you had as good make a point of first giving away yourself, as I'm going to prepare the writings between you and Miss Richland this very minute. What a fuss is here about nothing! Why, what's the matter now? I thought I had made you at least as happy as you could wish

Olv Oh yes, sir, very happy

Cro Do you foresee anything, child? You look as if you did. I think if anything was to be foreseen, I have as sharp a look-out as another, and yet I foresee nothing.

[*Exit.*]

Olv What can it mean?

Leon He knows something, and yet for my life I can't tell what

Olv It can't be the connection between us, I'm pretty certain

Leon Whatever it be, my dearest, I am resolved to put it out of fortune's power to repeat our mortification.

I'll haste and prepare for our journey to Scotland this very evening My friend Honeywood has promised me his advice and assistance I'll go to him, and repose our distresses on his friendly bosom, and I know so much of his honest heart, that if he can't relieve our uneasiness, he will at least share them *[Exeunt*

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE—*Young HONEYWOOD's House.*

BAILIFF, HONEYWOOD, Follower

Bail Lookye, sir, I have arrested as good men as you in my time no disparagement of you neither men that would go forty guineas on a game of cribbage I challenge the town to show a man in more genteeler practice than myself

Hon Without all question, Mr —— I forget your name, sir

Bail How can you forget what you never knew ? he ! he ! he !

Hon May I beg leave to ask your name ?

Bail Yes, you may

Hon Then, pray, sir, what is your name ?

Bail That I didn't promise to tell you He ! he ! he ! A joke breaks no bones, as we say among us that practise the law

Hon You may have reason for keeping it a secret, perhaps ?

Bail The law does nothing without reason. I'm ashamed to tell my name to no man, sir If you can show cause, as why, upon a special capus, that I should prove my name—But, come, Timothy Twitch is my name. And, now you know my name, what have you to say to that ?

Hon Nothing in the world, good Mr Twitch, but that I have a favour to ask, that's all.

Bail Ay, favours are more easily asked than granted, as we say among us that practise the law I have taken an oath against granting favours Would you have me perjure myself ?

Hon But my request will come recommended in so strong a manner, as, I believe, you'll have no scruple (*pulling out his purse*) The thing is only this I believe I shall be able to discharge this trifle in two or three days at farthest, but as I would not have the affair known for the world, I have thoughts of keeping you, and your good friend here, about me till the debt is discharged, for which I shall be properly grateful

Bail Oh ! that's another maxum, and altogether within my oath For certain, if an honest man is to get anything by a thing, there's no reason why all things should not be done in civility

Hon Doubtless, all trades must live, Mr Twitch, and yours is a necessary one (*Gives him money*)

Bail Oh ! your honour, I hope your honour takes nothing amiss as I does, as I does nothing but my duty in so doing I'm sure no man can say I ever give a gentleman, that was a gentleman, ill usage If I saw that a gentleman was a gentleman, I have taken money not to see him for ten weeks together

Hon Tenderness is a virtue, Mr Twitch

Bail Ay, sir, it's a perfect treasure I love to see a gentleman with a tender heart I don't know, but I think I have a tender heart myself If all that I have lost by my heart was put together, it would make a—but no matter for that

Hon Don't account it lost, Mr. Twitch The ingratitude of the world can never deprive us of the conscious happiness of having acted with humanity ourselves

Bail Humanity, sir, is a jewel. It's better than gold I love humanity People may say, that we in our way have no humanity ; but I'll show you my humanity this moment There's my follower here, little Flanigan, with

a wife and four children , a guinea or two would be more to him than twice as much to another Now, as I can't show him any humanity myself, I must beg leave you'll do it for me

Hon I assure you, Mr Twitch, yours is a most powerful recommendation (*Giving money to the Follower*)

Bail Sir, you're a gentleman I see you know what to do with your money But to business we are to be with you here as your friends, I suppose But set in case company comes Little Flanigan here, to be sure, has a good face , a very good face , but then, he is a little seedy, as we say among us that practise the law Not well in clothes Smoke the pocket-holes

Hon Well, that shall be remedied without delay

Enter Servant.

Ser Sir, Miss Richland is below.

Hon How unlucky ! Detain her a moment We must improve my good friend little Mr Flanigan's appearance first Here, let Mr Flanigan have a suit of my clothes—quick—the brown and silver—Do you hear ?

Ser That your honour gave away to the begging gentleman that makes verses, because it was as good as new

Hon The white and gold then

Ser That, your honour, I made bold to sell, because it was good for nothing

Hon Well, the first that comes to hand then. The blue and gold then I believe Mr Flanigan will look best in blue

[*Exit FLANIGAN*]

Bail Rabbit me, but little Flanigan will look well in anything Ah, if your honour knew that bit of flesh as well as I do, you'd be perfectly in love with him There's not a prettier scout in the four counties after a shy-cock than he scents like a hound , sticks like a weasel He was master of the ceremonies to the black Queen of

Morocco, when I took him to follow me. (*Re-enter FLANIGAN*) Heh, ecod, I think he looks so well, that I don't care if I have a suit from the same place myself

Hon Well, well, I hear the lady coming Dear Mr Twitch, I beg you'll give your friend directions not to speak As for yourself, I know you will say nothing without being directed

Barl Never you fear me, I'll show the lady that I have something to say for myself as well as another One man has one way of talking, and another man has another, that's all the difference between them

Enter MISS RICHLAND and her Maid

Miss Rich You'll be surprised, sir, with this visit But you know I've yet to thank you for choosing my little library

Hon Thanks, madam, are unnecessary, as it was I that was obliged by your commands Chairs here Two of my very good friends, Mr Twitch and Mr Flanigan Pray, gentlemen, sit without ceremony

Miss Rich Who can these odd-looking men be! I fear it is as I was informed It must be so (*Aside*)

Barl (*After a pause*) Pretty weather; very pretty weather for the time of year, madam

Fol. Very good circuit weather in the country

Hon. You officers are generally favourites among the ladies. My friends, madam, have been upon very disagreeable duty, I assure you The fair should, in some measure, recompense the toils of the brave

Miss Rich Our officers do indeed deserve every favour The gentlemen are in the marine service, I presume, sir.

Hon Why, madam, they do—occasionally serve in the fleet, madam A dangerous service!

Miss Rich I'm told so And I own it has often surprised me, that while we have had so many instances of bravery there, we have had so few of wit at home to praise it.

Hon I grant, madam, that our poets have not written as our soldiers have fought, but they have done all they could, and Hawke or Amherst could do no more

Miss Rich I'm quite displeased when I see a fine subject spoiled by a dull writer

Hon We should not be so severe against dull writers, madam It is ten to one but the dullest writer exceeds the most rigid French critic who presumes to despise him

Fol Damn the French, the *parle vous*, and all that belongs to them

Miss Rich Sir!

Hon Ha, ha, ha! honest Mr Flanagan A true English officer, madam, he's not contented with beating the French, but he will scold them too

Miss Rich Yet, Mr Honeywood, this does not convince me but that severity in criticism is necessary It was our first adopting the severity of French taste, that has brought them in turn to taste us

Barl Taste us! By the Lord, madam, they devour us. Give monseers but a taste, and I'll be damned but they come in for a bellyful

Miss Rich. Very extraordinary this!

Fol But very true What makes the bread rising? the *parle vous* that devour us What makes the mutton fivepence a pound? the *parle vous* that eat it up What makes the beer threepence-halfpenny a pot?—

Hon. Ah! the vulgar rogues, all will be out (*as'le*). Right, gentlemen, very right, upon my word, and quite to the purpose They draw a parallel, madam, between the mental taste and that of our senses We are injured as much by the French severity in the one, as by French rapacity in the other. That's their meaning

Miss Rich Though I don't see the force of the parallel, yet I'll own, that we should sometimes pardon books, as we do our friends, that have now and then agreeable absurdities to recommend them.

Bail That's all my eye The king only can pardon, as the law says for, set in case——

Hon I'm quite of your opinion, sir I see the whole drift of your argument Yes, certainly, our presuming to pardon any work is arrogating a power that belongs to another If all have power to condemn, what writer can be free ?

Bail. By his *habus corpus* His *habus corpus* can set him free at any time for, set in case——

Hon I'm obliged to you, sir, for the hint If, madam, as my friend observes, our laws are so careful of a gentleman's person, sure we ought to be equally careful of his dearer part, his fame

Fol Ay, but if so be a man's nabbed, you know——

Hon Mr Flanigan, if you spoke for ever, you could not improve the last observation For my own part, I think it conclusive

Bail. As for the matter of that, mayhap——

Hon Nay, sir, give me leave in this instance to be positive For where is the necessity of censuring works without genius, which must shortly sink of themselves ? what is it, but aiming an unnecessary blow against a victim already under the hands of justice ?

Bail Justice ! Oh, by the elevens, if you talk about justice, I think I am at home there for, in a course of law——

Hon. My dear Mr Twitch, I discern what you'd be at, perfectly, and I believe the lady must be sensible of the art with which it is introduced I suppose you perceive the meaning, madam, of his course of law

Miss Rich I protest, sir, I do not I perceive only that you answer one gentleman before he has finished, and the other before he has well begun

Bail. Madam, you are a gentlewoman, and I will make the matter out This here question is about severity, and justice, and pardon, and the like of they. Now, to explain the thing——

Hon. Oh ! curse your explanations. (*Aside*)

Enter Servant

Ser Mr Leontine, sir, below, desires to speak with you upon earnest business

Hon That's lucky (*aside*) Dear madam, you'll excuse me and my good friends here, for a few minutes There are books, madam, to amuse you Come, gentlemen, you know I make no ceremony with such friends After you, sir Excuse me Well, if I must But I know your natural politeness

Bail Before and behind, you know

Fol Ay, ay, before and behind, before and behind

[*Exeunt* HONEYWOOD, BAILIFF, and Follower

Miss Rich What can all this mean, Garnet?

Gar Mean, madam! why, what should it mean, but what Mr Lofty sent you here to see? These people he calls officers are officers sure enough, sheriff's officers, bailiffs, madam

Miss Rich Ay, it is certainly so Well, though his perplexities are far from giving me pleasure, yet I own there is something very ridiculous in them, and a just punishment for his dissimulation

Gar And so they are But I wonder, madam, that the lawyer you just employed to pay his debts, and set him free, has not done it by this time He ought at least to have been here before now But lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles than out of them

Enter SIR WILLIAM HONEYWOOD

Sir Wil For Miss Richland to undertake setting him free, I own, was quite unexpected. It has totally unpleased my schemes to reclaim him Yet it gives me pleasure to find that, among a number of worthless friendships, he has made one acquisition of real value, for there must be some softer passion on her side that prompts this generosity Ha! here before me I'll endeavour to sound her affections—Madam, as I am

the person that have had some demands upon the gentleman of this house, I hope you'll excuse me, if before I enlarged him, I wanted to see yourself

Miss Rich The precaution was very unnecessary, sir I suppose your wants were only such as my agent had power to satisfy

Sir Wil Partly, madam. But I was also willing you should be fully apprised of the character of the gentleman you intended to serve.

Miss Rich It must come, sir, with a very ill grace from you To censure it after what you have done, would look like malice, and to speak favourably of a character you have oppressed, would be impeaching your own And sure, his tenderness, his humanity, his universal friendship, may atone for many faults

Sir Wil That friendship, madam, which is exerted in too wide a sphere, becomes totally useless Our bounty, like a drop of water, disappears when diffused too widely They who pretend most to this universal benevolence are either deceivers or dupes men who desire to cover their private ill-nature by a pretended regard for all, or men who, reasoning themselves into false feelings, are more earnest in pursuit of splendid, than of useful virtues

Miss Rich I am surprised, sir, to hear one, who has probably been a gainer by the folly of others, so severe in his censure of it

Sir Wil Whatever I may have gained by folly, madam, you see I am willing to prevent your losing by it.

Miss Rich Your cares for me, sir, are unnecessary. I always suspect those services which are denied where they are wanted, and offered, perhaps, in hopes of a refusal No, sir, my directions have been given, and I insist upon their being complied with

Sir Wil. Thou amiable woman! I can no longer contain the expressions of my gratitude, my pleasure You see before you one who has been equally careful of his interest; one, who has for some time been a con-

ceased spectator of his follies, and only punished in hopes to reclaim him—his uncle !

Miss Rich Sir William Honeywood ! You amaze me. How shall I conceal my confusion ? I fear, sir, you'll think I have been too forward in my services I confess I——

Sir Wil Don't make any apologies, madam I only find myself unable to repay the obligation And yet, I have been trying my interest of late to serve you Having learnt, madam, that you had some demands upon Government, I have, though unasked, been your solicitor there.

Miss Rich Sir, I'm infinitely obliged to your intentions But my guardian has employed another gentleman, who assures him of success

Sir Wil Who ? The important little man that visits here ? Trust me, madam, he's quite contemptible among men in power, and utterly unable to serve you Mr Lofty's promises are much better known to people of fashion, than his person, I assure you

Miss Rich How have we been deceived ! As sure as can be, here he comes

Sir. Wil Does he ? Remember I'm to continue unknown My return to England has not yet been made public. With what impudence he enters !

Enter LOFTY

Lof. Let the chariot—let my chariot drive off, I'll visit to his grace's in a chair Miss Richland here before me ! Punctual, as usual, to the calls of humanity I'm very sorry, madam, things of this kind should happen, especially to a man I have shown everywhere, and carried amongst us as a particular acquaintance

Miss Rich. I find, sir, you have the art of making the misfortunes of others your own.

Lof. My dear madam, what can a private man like me do ? One man can't do everything, and then, I do

so much in this way every day Let me see , something considerable might be done for him by subscription , it could not fail if I carried the list I'll undertake to set down a brace of dukes, two dozen lords, and half the lower house, at my own peril

Sir Wil And, after all, it's more than probable, sir, he might reject the offer of such powerful patronage

Lof Then, madam, what can we do ? You know I never make promises In truth, I once or twice tried to do something with him in the way of business , but, as I often told his uncle, Sir William Honeywood, the man was utterly impracticable

Sir Wil His uncle ! then that gentleman, I suppose, is a particular friend of yours

Lof Meaning me, sir ?—Yes, madam, as I often said, my dear Sir William, you are sensible I would do anything, as far as my poor interest goes, to serve your family but what can be done ? there's no procuring first-rate places for ninth-rate abilities

Miss Rich I have heard of Sir William Honeywood , he's abroad in employment he confided in your judgment, I suppose

Lof Why, yes, madam, I believe Sir William had some reason to confide in my judgment , one little reason, perhaps

Miss Rich Pray, sir, what was it ?

Lof Why, madam—but let it go no farther—it was I procured him his place

Sir Wil Did you, sir ?

Lof Either you or I, sir

Miss Rich This, Mr Lofty, was very kind indeed

Lof I did love him, to be sure , he had some amusing qualities , no man was fitter to be a toast-master to a club, or had a better head

Miss Rich A better head ?

Lof Ay, at a bottle To be sure, he was as dull as a choice spirit, but, hang it, he was grateful, very grateful, and gratitude hides a multitude of faults

Sir Wil He might have reason, perhaps His place is pretty considerable, I'm told

Lof A trifle, a mere trifle among us men of business The truth is, he wanted dignity to fill up a greater

Sir Wil Dignity of person, do you mean, sir? I'm told he's much about my size and figure, sir

Lof Ay, tall enough for a marching regiment; but then he wanted a something—a consequence of form—a kind of a—I believe the lady perceives my meaning

Miss Rich Oh, perfectly, you courtiers can do anything, I see

Lof My dear madam, all this is but a mere exchange, we do greater things for one another every day Why, as thus, now let me suppose you the First Lord of the Treasury, you have an employment in you that I want, I have a place in me that you want do me here, do you there interest of both sides, few words, flat, done and done, and it's over

Sir Wil A thought strikes me (*aside*) Now you mention Sir William Honeywood, madam, and as he seems, sir, an acquaintance of yours, you'll be glad to hear he's arrived from Italy I had it from a friend who knows him as well as he does me, and you may depend on my information

Lof The devil he is! If I had known that, we should not have been quite so well acquainted (*Aside*)

Sir Wil He is certainly returned, and, as this gentleman is a friend of yours, he can be of signal service to us, by introducing me to him there are some papers relative to your affairs, that require dispatch and his inspection

Miss Rich This gentleman, Mr Lofty, is a person employed in my affairs. I know you'll serve us

Lof My dear madam, I live but to serve you Sir William shall even wait upon him, if you think proper to command it

Sir Wil That will be quite unnecessary

Lof Well, we must introduce you, then Call upon me—let me see—ay, in two days

Sir Wil Now, or the opportunity will be lost for ever

Lof Well, if it must be now, now let it be But damn it, that's unfortunate, my Lord Grig's cursed Pensacola business comes on this very hour, and I'm engaged to attend—another time——

Sir Wil A short letter to Sir William will do

Lof You shall have it, yet, in my opinion, a letter is a very bad way of going to work, face to face, that's my way

Sir Wil The letter, sir, will do quite as well

Lof Zounds! Sir, do you pretend to direct me in the business of office? Do you know me, sir? Who am I?

Miss Rich Dear Mr Lofty, this request is not so much his as mine, if my commands—but you despise my power

Lof Delicate creature! your commands could even control a debate at midnight. to a power so constitutional, I am all obedience and tranquillity He shall have a letter where is my secretary? Dubardieu! And yet, I protest I don't like this way of doing business I think if I spoke first to Sir William—but you will have it so

[Exit with MISS RICHLAND

Sir Wil (Alone) Ha! ha! ha!—This, too, is one of my nephew's hopeful associates O vanity, thou constant deceiver, how do all thy efforts to exalt, serve but to sink us! Thy false colourings, like those employed to heighten beauty, only seem to mend that bloom which they contribute to destroy I'm not displeased at this interview exposing this fellow's impudence to the contempt it deserves, may be of use to my design, at least, if he can reflect, it will be of use to himself

Enter JARVIS

Sir Wil How now, Jarvis, where's your master, my nephew?

Jar At his wit's ends, I believe he's scarce gotten

out of one scrape, but he's running his head into another.

Sir Wil How so ?

Jar The house has but just been cleared of the bailiffs, and now he's again engaging, tooth and nail, in assisting old Croaker's son to patch up a clandestine match with the young lady that passes in the house for his sister.

Sir Wil Ever busy to serve others

Jar Ay, anybody but himself The young couple, it seems, are just setting out for Scotland, and he supplies them with money for the journey

Sir Wil Money ! how is he able to supply others, who has scarce any for himself ?

Jar Why, there it is he has no money, that's true, but then, as he never said *No* to any request in his life, he has given them a bill, drawn by a friend of his upon a merchant in the city, which I am to get changed, for you must know that I am to go with them to Scotland myself

Sir Wil How ?

Jar It seems the young gentleman is obliged to take a different road from his mistress, as he is to call upon an uncle of his that lives out of the way, in order to prepare a place for their reception, when they return, so they have borrowed me from my master, as the properest person to attend the young lady down

Sir Wil To the land of matrimony ! A pleasant journey, Jarvis

Jar Ay, but I'm only to have all the fatigues on't

Sir Wil Well, it may be shorter, and less fatiguing, than you imagine I know but too much of the young lady's family and connections, whom I have seen abroad I have also discovered that Miss Richland is not indifferent to my thoughtless nephew ; and will endeavour, though I fear in vain, to establish that connection But, come, the letter I wait for must be almost finished, I'll let you further into my intentions, in the next room

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT THE FOURTH

SCENE—CROAKER'S *House*

Lof Well, sure the devil's in me of late, for running my head into such defiles, as nothing but a genius like my own could draw me from. I was formerly contented to husband out my places and pensions with some degree of frugality, but, curse it, of late I have given away the whole Court Register in less time than they could print the title-page yet, hang it, why scruple a lie or two to come at a fine girl, when I every day tell a thousand for nothing. Ha! Honeywood here before me! Could Miss Richland have set him at liberty?

Enter HONEYWOOD

Mr Honeywood, I'm glad to see you abroad again. I find my concurrence was not necessary in your unfortunate affairs. I had put things in a train to do your business, but it is not for me to say what I intended doing.

Hon It was unfortunate indeed, sir. But what adds to my uneasiness is, that while you seem to be acquainted with my misfortune, I myself continue still a stranger to my benefactor.

Lof How! not know the friend that served you?

Hon Can't guess at the person.

Lof Inquire.

Hon I have, but all I can learn is, that he chooses to remain concealed, and that all inquiry must be fruitless.

Lof Must be fruitless !

Hon Absolutely fruitless

Lof Sure of that ?

Hon Very sure

Lof Then I'll be damned if you shall ever know it from me

Hon How, sir !

Lof I suppose now, Mr Honeywood, you think my rent-roll very considerable, and that I have vast sums of money to throw away, I know you do The world, to be sure, says such things of me

Hon The world, by what I learn, is no stranger to your generosity But where does this tend ?

Lof To nothing, nothing in the world The town, to be sure, when it makes such a thing as me the subject of conversation, has asserted, that I never yet patronized a man of merit

Hon I have heard instances to the contrary, even from yourself

Lof Yes, Honeywood, and there are instances to the contrary, that you shall never hear from myself

Hon Ha ! dear sir, permit me to ask you but one question

Lof Sir, ask me no questions, I say, sir, ask me no questions, I'll be damned if I answer them

Hon I will ask no further My friend ! my benefactor ! it is, it must be here, that I am indebted for freedom, for honour Yes, thou worthiest of men, from the beginning I suspected it, but was afraid to return thanks, which, if undeserved, might seem reproaches

Lof I protest I do not understand all this, Mr. Honeywood you treat me very cavalierly I do assure you, sir—Blood ! sir, can't a man be permitted to enjoy the luxury of his own feelings, without all this parade ?

Hon Nay, do not attempt to conceal an action that adds to your honour Your looks, your air, your manner, all confess it

Lof Confess it, sir ! Torture itself, sir, shall never

bring me to confess it Mr Honeywood, I have admitted you upon terms of friendship Don't let us fall out, make me happy, and let this be buried in oblivion You know I hate ostentation, you know I do Come, come, Honeywood, you know I always loved to be a friend, and not a patron I beg this may make no kind of distance between us Come, come, you and I must be more familiar—indeed we must

Hon Heavens ! Can I ever repay such friendship ? Is there any way ?—Thou best of men, can I ever return the obligation ?

Lof A bagatelle, a mere bagatelle ! But I see your heart is labouring to be grateful. You shall be grateful It would be cruel to disappoint you

Hon How ! teach me the manner Is there any way ?

Lof. From this moment you're mine Yes, my friend, you shall know it—I'm in love

Hon And can I assist you ?

Lof. Nobody so well

Hon In what manner ? I'm all impatience

Lof You shall make love for me

Hon And to whom shall I speak in your favour ?

Lof To a lady with whom you have great interest, I assure you . Miss Richland.

Hon Miss Richland !

Lof Yes, Miss Richland She has struck the blow up to the hilt in my bosom, by Jupiter !

Hon Heavens ! was ever anything more unfortunate ! It is too much to be endured

Lof Unfortunate, indeed ! And yet I can endure it, till you have opened the affair to her for me Between ourselves, I think she likes me. I'm not apt to boast, but I think she does

Hon Indeed ! But, do you know the person you apply to ?

Lof. Yes, I know you are her friend and mine : that's enough To you, therefore, I commit the success of

my passion I'll say no more, let friendship do the rest I have only to add, that if at any time my little interest can be of service—but, hang it, I'll make no promises—you know my interest is yours at any time. No apologies, my friend, I'll not be answered, it shall be so

[*Exit*

Hon Open, generous, unsuspecting man! He little thinks that I love her too, and with such an ardent passion!—But then it was ever but a vain and hopeless one, my torment, my persecution! What shall I do? Love, friendship, a hopeless passion, a deserving friend! Love, that has been my tormentor, a friend, that has, perhaps, distressed himself to serve me. It shall be so. Yes, I will discard the fondling hope from my bosom, and exert all my influence in his favour. And yet to see her in the possession of another!—Insupportable! But then to betray a generous, trusting friend!—Worse, worse! Yes, I'm resolved. Let me but be the instrument of their happiness, and then quit a country, where I must for ever despair of finding my own

[*Exit.*

Enter OLIVIA and GARNET, who carries a Milliner's Box

Olv Dear me, I wish this journey were over. No news of Jarvis yet? I believe the old peevish creature delays purely to vex me.

Gar Why, to be sure, madam, I did hear him say, a little snubbing before marriage would teach you to bear it the better afterwards.

Olv To be gone a full hour, though he had only to get a bill changed in the city! How provoking!

Gar I'll lay my life, Mr Leontine, that had twice as much to do, is setting off by this time from his inn, and here you are left behind.

Olv Well, let us be prepared for his coming, however. Are you sure you have omitted nothing, Garnet?

Gar Not a stick, madam—all's here. Yet I wish you could take the white and silver to be married in. It's

the worst luck in the world, in anything but white I knew one Bett Stubbs, of our town, that was married in red, and, as sure as eggs is eggs, the bridegroom and she had a miff before morning

Oliv No matter I'm all impatience till we are out of the house

Gar Bless me, madam, I had almost forgot the wedding ring!—The sweet little thing—I don't think it would go on my little finger. And what if I put in a gentleman's night-cap, in case of necessity, madam? But here's Jarvis

Enter JARVIS

Oliv O Jarvis, are you come at last? We have been ready this half-hour Now let's be going Let us fly!

Jar Ay, to Jericho, for we shall have no going to Scotland this bout, I fancy

Oliv How! what's the matter?

Jar Money, money, is the matter, madam We have got no money What the plague do you send me of your fool's errand? My master's bill upon the city is not worth a rush Here it is, Mrs Garnet may pin up her hair with it

Oliv Undone! How could Honeywood serve us so! What shall we do? Can't we go without it?

Jar Go to Scotland without money! To Scotland without money! Lord, how some people understand geography! We might as well set sail for Patagonia upon a cork jacket

Oliv Such a disappointment! What a base, insincere man was your master, to serve us in this manner! Is this his good-nature?

Jar Nay, don't talk ill of my master, madam, I won't bear to hear anybody talk ill of him but myself

Gar Bless us! now I think on't, madam, you need not be under any uneasiness I saw Mr. Leontine receive forty guineas from his father just before he set out, and

he can't yet have left the inn. A short letter will reach him there

Olv Well remembered, Garnet, I'll write immediately How's this! Bless me, my hand trembles so, I can't write a word Do you write, Garnet, and, upon second thought, it will be better from you

Gar Truly, madam, I write and indite but poorly I never was 'cute at my learning But I'll do what I can to please you Let me see All out of my own head, I suppose!

Olv Whatever you please

Gar (*Writing*) Muster Croaker—Twenty guineas, madam?

Olv Ay, twenty will do

Gar At the bar of the Talbot till called for Expedition—Will be blown up—All of a flame—Quick dispatch—Cupid, the little god of love—I conclude it, madam, with Cupid I love to see a love-letter end like poetry

Olv Well, well, what you please, anything But how shall we send it? I can trust none of the servants of this family

Gar Odso, madam, Mr Honeywood's butler is in the next room he's a dear, sweet man, he'll do anything for me

Jar He! the dog, he'll certainly commit some blunder. He's drunk and sober ten times a day.

Olv No matter Fly, Garnet, anybody we can trust will do (*Exit GARNET*) Well, Jarvis, now we can have nothing more to interrupt us, you may take up the things, and carry them on to the inn Have you no hands, Jarvis?

Jar Soft and fair, young lady You, that are going to be married, think things can never be done too fast, but we, that are old, and know what we are about, must plope methodically, madam

Olv Well, sure, if my indiscretions were to be done over again——

Jar My life for it, you would do them ten times over

Olv Why will you talk so? If you knew how unhappy they make me——

Jar Very unhappy, no doubt I was once just as unhappy when I was going to be married myself I'll tell you a story about that——

Olv A story! when I'm all impatience to be away Was there ever such a dilatory creature!——

Jar Well, madam, if we must march, why, we will march, that's all Though, odds bobs, we have still forgot one thing, we should never travel without—a case of good razors, and a box of shaving-powder But no matter, I believe we shall be pretty well shaved by the way

[*Going*]

Enter GARNET

Gar Undone, undone, madam Ah, Mr Jarvis, you said right enough As sure as death, Mr Honeywood's rogue of a drunken butler dropped the letter before he went ten yards from the door There's old Croaker has just picked it up, and is this moment reading it to himself in the hall

Olv Unfortunate! We shall be discovered

Gar No, madam, don't be uneasy, he can neither make head nor tail of it To be sure he looks as if he was broke loose from Bedlam about it, but he can't find what it means for all that O lud, he is coming this way all in the horrors

Olv Then let us leave the house this instant, for fear he should ask further questions In the meantime, Garnet, do you write and send off just such another

[*Exeunt*]

Enter CROAKER

Cro Death and destruction! Are all the horrors of air, fire, and water to be levelled only at me? Am I only to be singled out for gunpowder-plots, combustibles, and conflagration? Here it is—an incendiary letter

dropped at my door "To Muster Croaker, these with speed" Ay, ay, plain enough the direction all in the genuine incendiary spelling, and as cramp as the devil "With speed" O, confound your speed But let me read it once more (*Reads*) "Muster Croaker, as sone as yow see this, leve twenty gunnes at the bar of the Talboot tell caled for, or yowe and yower experetion will be al blown up" Ah, but too plain Blood and gunpowder in every line of it Blown up! murderous dog! all blown up! Heavens! what have I and my poor family done, to be all blown up? (*Reads*) "Our pockets are low, and money we must have" Ay, there's the reason, they'll blow us up, because they have got low pockets (*Reads*) "It is but a short time you have to consider, for if this takes wind, the house will quickly be all of a flame" Inhuman monsters! blow us up, and then burn us! The earthquake at Lisbon was but a bonfire to it (*Reads*) "Make quick dispatch, and so no more at present But may Cupid, the little god of love, go with you wherever you go" The little god of love! Cupid, the little god of love, go with me! Go you to the devil, you and your little Cupid together I'm so frightened, I scarce know whether I sit, stand, or go Perhaps this moment I'm treading on lighted matches, blazing brimstone, and barrels of gunpowder They are preparing to blow me up into the clouds Murder! we shall be all burnt in our beds, we shall be all burnt in our beds!

Enter MISS RICHLAND.

Miss Rich Lord, sir, what's the matter?

Cro Murder's the matter! We shall all be blown up in our beds before morning

Miss Rich I hope not, sir.

Cro What signifies what you hope, madam, when I have a certificate of it here in my hand? Will nothing alarm my family? Sleeping and eating, sleeping and

eating, is the only work from morning till night in my house. My insensible crew could sleep, though rocked by an earthquake, and fry beef-steaks at a volcano.

Miss Rich But, sir, you have alarmed them so often already, we have nothing but earthquakes, famines, plagues, and mad dogs, from year's end to year's end. You remember, sir, it is not above a month ago, you assured us of a conspiracy among the bakers, to poison us in our bread, and so kept the whole family a week upon potatoes.

Cro And potatoes were too good for them. But why do I stand talking here with a girl when I should be facing the enemy without? Here, John, Nicodemus, search the house. Look into the cellars, to see if there be any combustibles below, and above, in the apartments, that no matches be thrown in at the windows. Let all the fires be put out, and let the engine be drawn out in the yard, to play upon the house in case of necessity. *[Exit*

Miss Rich (*Alone*) What can he mean by all this? Yet, why should I inquire, when he alarms us in this manner almost every day? But Honeywood has desired an interview with me in private. What can he mean? or, rather, what means this palpitation at his approach? It is the first time he ever showed anything in his conduct that seemed particular. Sure he cannot mean to—but he's here.

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon I presumed to solicit this interview, madam, before I left town, to be permitted——

Miss Rich Indeed! Leaving town, sir?

Hon Yes, madam, perhaps the kingdom. I have presumed, I say, to desire the favour of this interview,—in order to disclose something which our long friendship prompts. And yet my fears——

Miss Rich. His fears! What are his fears to mine!

(*Aside*) We have indeed been long acquainted, sir, very long. If I remember, our first meeting was at the French ambassador's—Do you recollect how you were pleased to rally me upon my complexion there?

Hon Perfectly, madam. I presumed to reprove you for painting, but your warmer blushes soon convinced the company that the colouring was all from nature.

Miss Rich And yet you only meant it in your good-natured way, to make me pay a compliment to myself. In the same manner you danced that night with the most awkward woman in company, because you saw nobody else would take her out.

Hon Yes, and was rewarded the next night, by dancing with the finest woman in company, whom everybody wished to take out.

Miss Rich Well, sir, if you thought so then, I fear your judgment has since corrected the errors of a first impression. We generally show to most advantage at first. Our sex are like poor tradesmen, that put all their best goods to be seen at the windows.

Hon The first impression, madam, did indeed deceive me. I expected to find a woman with all the faults of conscious flattered beauty, I expected to find her vain and insolent. But every day has since taught me that it is possible to possess sense without pride, and beauty without affectation.

Miss Rich This, sir, is a style very unusual with Mr Honeywood, and I should be glad to know why he thus attempts to increase that vanity, which his own lessons have taught me to despise.

Hon I ask pardon, madam. Yet, from our long friendship, I presumed I might have some right to offer, without offence, what you may refuse without offending.

Miss Rich Sir! I beg you'd reflect, though, I fear, I shall scarce have any power to refuse a request of yours, yet you may be precipitate—consider, sir.

Hon I own my rashness, but as I plead the cause of friendship, of one who loves—don't be alarmed, madam.

—who loves you with the most ardent passion, whose whole happiness is placed in you——

Miss Rich I fear, sir, I shall never find whom you mean, by this description of him

Hon Ah, madam, it but too plainly points him out, though he should be too humble himself to urge his pretensions, or you too modest to understand them

Miss Rich Well, it would be affectation any longer to pretend ignorance, and I will own, sir, I have long been prejudiced in his favour. It was but natural to wish to make his heart mine, as he seemed himself ignorant of its value

Hon I see she always loved him (*aside*) I find, madam, you're already sensible of his worth, his passion. How happy is my friend, to be the favourite of one with such sense to distinguish merit, and such beauty to reward it!

Miss Rich Your friend, sir! What friend?

Hon My best friend—my friend Mr Lofty, madam

Miss Rich He, sir!

Hon Yes, he, madam. He is, indeed, what your warmest wishes might have formed him, and to his other qualities he adds that of the most passionate regard for you

Miss Rich Amazement!—No more of this, I beg you, sir

Hon I see your confusion, madam, and know how to interpret it. And, since I so plainly read the language of your heart, shall I make my friend happy, by communicating your sentiments?

Miss Rich By no means

Hon. Excuse me, I must, I know you desire it

Miss Rich Mr Honeywood, let me tell you, that you wrong my sentiments, and yourself. When I first applied to your friendship, I expected advice and assistance; but now, sir, I see that it is in vain to expect happiness from him, who has been so bad an economist

of his own , and that I must disclaim his friendship who ceases to be a friend to himself [Exit.

Hon How is this ! she has confessed she loved him, and yet she seemed to part in displeasure Can I have done anything to reproach myself with ? No , I believe not yet, after all, these things should not be done by a third person I should have spared her confusion. My friendship carried me a little too far

Enter CROAKER, with the Letter in his hand,
and MRS. CROAKER

Mrs Cro Ha ! ha ! ha ! And so, my dear, it's your supreme wish that I should be quite wretched upon this occasion ? Ha ! ha !

Cro (*Mimicking*) Ha ! ha ! ha ! And so, my dear, it's your supreme pleasure to give me no better consolation ?

Mrs Cro Positively, my dear , what is this incendiary stuff and trumpery to me ? Our house may travel through the air like the house of Loretto, for aught I care, if I am to be miserable in it.

Cro Would to Heaven it were converted into a house of correction for your benefit ! Have we not everything to alarm us ? Perhaps this very moment the tragedy is beginning.

Mrs Cro Then let us reserve our distress till the rising of the curtain, or give them the money they want, and have done with them

Cro Give them my money !—And pray, what right have they to my money ?

Mrs Cro And pray, what right then have you to my good humour ?

Cro And so your good humour advises me to part with my money ? Why then, to tell your good humour a piece of my mind, I'd sooner part with my wife Here's Mr. Honeywood , see what he'll say to it. My dear Honeywood, look at this incendiary letter, dropped at my door It will freeze you with terror , and yet lovey here can read it—can read it, and laugh !

Mrs Cro Yes, and so will Mr Honeywood

Cro If he does, I'll suffer to be hanged the next minute in the rogue's place, that's all

Mrs Cro Speak, Mr Honeywood, is there anything more foolish than my husband's fright upon this occasion?

Hon It would not become me to decide, madam, but, doubtless, the greatness of his terrors now will but invite them to renew their villainy another time

Mrs Cro I told you he'd be of my opinion

Cro How, sir! do you maintain that I should lie down under such an injury, and show neither by my tears, nor complaints, that I have something of the spirit of a man in me?

Hon Pardon me, sir You ought to make the loudest complaints, if you desire redress The surest way to have redress is to be earnest in the pursuit of it

Cro Ay, whose opinion is he of now?

Mrs Cro But don't you think that laughing off our fears is the best way?

Hon What is the best, madam, few can say, but I'll maintain it to be a very wise way

Cro But we're talking of the best. Surely the best way is to face the enemy in the field, and not wait till he plunders us in our very bed-chamber

Hon Why, sir, as to the best, that—that's a very wise way too

Mrs Cro But can anything be more absurd than to double our distresses by our apprehensions, and put it in the power of every low fellow, that can scrawl ten words of wretched spelling, to torment us?

Hon Without doubt, nothing more absurd.

Cro How! would it not be more absurd to despise the rattle till we are bit by the snake?

Hon Without doubt, perfectly absurd.

Cro Then you are of my opinion?

Hon Entirely.

Mrs. Cro And you reject mine ?

Hon Heavens forbid, madam ! No, sure, no reasoning can be more just than yours We ought certainly to despise malice if we cannot oppose it, and not make the incendiary's pen as fatal to our repose as the highwayman's pistol

Mrs Cro Oh ! then you think I'm quite right ?

Hon Perfectly right

Cro A plague of plagues, we can't be both right ! I ought to be sorry, or I ought to be glad. My hat must be on my head, or my hat must be off

Mrs Cro Certainly, in two opposite opinions, if one be perfectly reasonable, the other can't be perfectly right.

Hon And why may not both be right, madam ? Mr Croaker in earnestly seeking redress, and you in waiting the event with good humour ? Pray, let me see the letter again I have it This letter requires twenty guineas to be left at the bar of the Talbot Inn. If it be indeed an incendiary letter, what if you and I, sir, go there, and, when the writer comes to be paid for his expected booty, seize him ?

Cro My dear friend, it's the very thing, the very thing While I walk by the door, you shall plant yourself in ambush near the bar, burst out upon the miscreant like a masked battery, extort a confession at once, and so hang him up by surprise.

Hon. Yes, but I would not choose to exercise too much severity It is my maxim, sir, that crimes generally punish themselves.

Cro Well, but we may upbraid him a little, I suppose ?
(Ironically)

Hon Ay, but not punish him too rigidly

Cro Well, well, leave that to my own benevolence.

Hon Well, I do ; but remember that universal benevolence is the first law of nature

[*Exeunt HONEYWOOD and MRS. CROAKER*]

Cro Yes, and my universal benevolence will hang the dog, if he had as many necks as a hydra.

ACT THE FIFTH

SCENE—*An Inn*

Enter OLIVIA and JARVIS

Olv Well, we have got safe to the inn, however
Now, if the post-chaise were ready——

Jar The horses are just finishing their oats, and,
as they are not going to be married, they choose to take
their own time

Olv You are for ever giving wrong motives to my
impatience

Jar Be as impatient as you will, the horses must
take their own time, besides, you don't consider, we
have got no answer from our fellow-traveller yet If
we hear nothing from Mr Leontine, we have only one
way left us

Olv What way?

Jar The way home again.

Olv Not so I have made a resolution to go, and
nothing shall induce me to break it

Jar Ay, resolutions are well kept, when they jump
with inclination However, I'll go hasten things
without And I'll call, too, at the bar, to see if any-
thing should be left for us there Don't be in such a
plaguy hurry, madam, and we shall go the faster, I
promise you

[*Exit JARVIS.*]

Enter LANDLADY.

Land What! Solomon, why don't you move? Pipes
and tobacco for the Lamb there—Will nobody answer?

To the Dolphin quick The Angel has been outrageous
this half-hour Did your ladyship call, madam ?

Oliv No, madam

Land I find, as you're for Scotland, madam—But
that's no business of mine, married, or not married,
I ask no questions To be sure we had a sweet little
couple set off from this two days ago for the same place
The gentleman, for a tailor, was, to be sure, as fine a
spoken tailor as ever blew froth from a full pot And
the young lady so bashful, it was near half an hour before
we could get her to finish a pint of raspberry between us

Oliv But this gentleman and I are not going to be
married, I assure you

Land May be not That's no business of mine ; for
certain, Scotch marriages seldom turn out —There was,
of my own knowledge, Miss Macfag, that married her
father's footman—Alack-a-day, she and her husband
soon parted, and now keep separate cellars in Hedge Lane.

Oliv A very pretty picture of what lies before me
(*Aside*)

Enter LEONTINE

Leon My dear Olivia, my anxiety, till you were out
of danger, was too great to be resisted I could not help
coming to see you set out, though it exposes us to a
discovery

Oliv May everything you do prove as fortunate
Indeed, Leontine, we have been most cruelly disappointed
Mr Honeywood's bill upon the city has, it seems, been
protested, and we have been utterly at a loss how to
proceed

Leon How ! an offer of his own too Sure, he could
not mean to deceive us ?

Oliv. Depend upon his sincerity, he only mistook
the desire for the power of serving us But let us think
no more of it I believe the post-chaise is ready by this

Land Not quite yet and, begging your ladyship's
pardon, I don't think your ladyship quite ready for the

post-chaise The north road is a cold place, madam I have a drop in the house of as pretty raspberry as ever was tipt over tongue Just a thimble-full to keep the wind off your stomach To be sure, the last couples we had here, they said it was a perfect nosegay Ecod, I sent them both away as good-natured—Up went the blinds, round went the wheels, and drive away post-boy, was the word

Enter CROAKER

Cro Well, while my friend Honeywood is upon the post of danger at the bar, it must be my business to have an eye about me here I think I know an incendiary's look, for wherever the devil makes a purchase, he never fails to set his mark Ha! who have we here? My son and daughter! What can they be doing here?

Land I tell you, madam, it will do you good, I think I know by this time what's good for the north road It's a raw night, madam—Sir——

Leon Not a drop more, good madam I should now take it as a greater favour, if you hasten the horses, for I am afraid to be seen myself

Land That shall be done Wha, Solomon! are you all dead there? Wha, Solomon, I say! [*Exit, bawling*]

Oliv Well, I dread lest an expedition begun in fear, should end in repentance—Every moment we stay increases our danger, and adds to my apprehensions

Leon There's no danger, trust me, my dear, there can be none If Honeywood has acted with honour, and kept my father, as he promised, in employment till we are out of danger, nothing can interrupt our journey

Oliv I have no doubt of Mr. Honeywood's sincerity, and even his desires to serve us My fears are from your father's suspicions A mind so disposed to be alarmed without a cause, will be but too ready when there's a reason

Leon Why, let him, when we are out of his power But believe me, Olivia, you have no great reason to

dread his resentment His repining temper, as it does no manner of injury to himself, so will it never do harm to others He only frets to keep himself employed, and scolds for his private amusement.

Oliv I don't know that, but, I'm sure, on some occasions, it makes him look most shockingly

Cro (*Discovering himself*) How does he look now?—How does he look now?

Oliv Ah!

Leon Undone!

Cro How do I look now? Sir, I am your very humble servant Madam, I am yours What, you are going off, are you? Then, first, if you please, take a word or two from me with you before you go Tell me first where you are going, and when you have told me that, perhaps I shall know as little as I did before

Leon If that be so, our answer might but increase your displeasure, without adding to your information

Cro I want no information from you, puppy and you too, good madam, what answer have you got? Eh! (*A cry without, Stop him!*) I think I heard a noise My friend Honeywood without—has he seized the incendiary? Ah, no, for now I hear no more on't.

Leon Honeywood without! Then, sir, it was Mr. Honeywood that directed you hither?

Cro No, sir, it was Mr Honeywood conducted me hither.

Leon Is it possible?

Cro. Possible! Why, he's in the house now, sir; more anxious about me than my own son, sir.

Leon Then, sir, he's a villain.

Cro How, sirrah! a villain, because he takes most care of your father? I'll not bear it I tell you I'll not bear it. Honeywood is a friend to the family, and I'll have him treated as such

Leon. I shall study to repay his friendship as it deserves

Cro Ah, rogue, if you knew how earnestly he entered

into my griefs, and pointed out the means to detect them, you would love him as I do (*A cry without, Stop him*) Fire and fury! they have seized the incendiary they have the villain, the incendiary in view Stop him! stop an incendiary! a murderer! stop him! [*Exit*

Olv Oh, my terrors! What can this tumult mean?

Leon Some new mark, I suppose, of Mr Honeywood's sincerity But we shall have satisfaction he shall give me instant satisfaction

Olv It must not be, my Leontine, if you value my esteem or my happiness Whatever be our fate, let us not add guilt to our misfortunes—Consider that our innocence will shortly be all that we have left us You must forgive him

Leon Forgive him! Has he not in every instance betrayed us? Forced me to borrow money from him, which appears a mere trick to delay us, promised to keep my father engaged till we were out of danger, and here brought him to the very scene of our escape?

Olv Don't be precipitate We may yet be mistaken

Enter POSTBOY, *dragging in* JARVIS, HONEYWOOD
entering soon after

Post Ay, master, we have him safe enough Here is the incendiary dog I'm entitled to the reward: I'll take my oath I saw him ask for the money at the bar, and then run for it

Hon Come, bring him along Let us see him. Let him learn to blush for his crimes. (*Discovering his mistake*) Death! what's here? Jarvis, Leontine, Olivia! What can all this mean?

Jar Why, I'll tell you what it means. that I was an old fool, and that you are my master—that's all

Hon Confusion!

Leon Yes, sir, I find you have kept your word with me. After such baseness, I wonder how you can venture to see the man you have injured?

Hon. My dear Leontine, by my life, my honour—

Leon Peace, peace, for shame, and do not continue to aggravate baseness, by hypocrisy I know you, sir, I know you

Hon Why, won't you hear me? By all that's just I knew not—

Leon Hear you, sir! to what purpose? I now see through all your low arts, your ever complying with every opinion, your never refusing any request your friendship as common as a prostitute's favours, and as fallacious, all these, sir, have long been contemptible to the world, and are now perfectly so to me

Hon Ha! contemptible to the world! that reaches me (*Aside*)

Leon All the seeming sincerity of your professions, I now find, were only allurements to betray, and all your seeming regret for their consequences, only calculated to cover the cowardice of your heart Draw, villain!

Enter CROAKER, out of breath

Cro Where is the villain? Where is the incendiary? (*Seizing the POSTBOY*) Hold him fast, the dog he has the gallows in his face Come, you dog, confess, confess all, and hang yourself

Post. Zounds! master, what do you throttle me for?

Cro (*Beating him*) Dog, do you resist? do you resist?

Post Zounds! master, I'm not he, there's the man that we thought was the rogue, and turns out to be one of the company

Cro. How!

Hon Mr Croaker, we have all been under a strange mistake here, I find there is nobody guilty, it was all an error, entirely an error of our own

Cro And I say, sir, that you're in an error, for there's guilt and double guilt, a plot, a damned jesuitical, pestilential plot, and I must have proof of it

Hon Do but hear me

Cro What, you intend to bring 'em off, I suppose? I'll hear nothing

Hon Madam, you seem at least calm enough to hear reason

Olv Excuse me

Hon Good Jarvis, let me then explain it to you

Jar What signifies explanations when the thing is done ?

Hon Will nobody hear me ? Was there ever such a set so blinded by passion and prejudice ? (*To the POSTBOY*) My good friend, I believe you'll be surprised when I assure you——

Post Sure me nothing—I'm sure of nothing but a good beating

Cro Come then, you, madam, if you ever hope for any favour or forgiveness, tell me sincerely all you know of this affair

Olv Unhappily, sir, I'm but too much the cause of your suspicions, you see before you, sir, one that with false pretences has stepped into your family to betray it, not your daughter——

Cro Not my daughter ?

Olv Not your daughter—but a mean deceiver—who—support me, I cannot——

Hon Help, she's going, give her air

Cro Ay, ay, take the young woman to the air, I would not hurt a hair of her head, whose ever daughter she may be—not so bad as that neither

[*Exeunt all but CROAKER*]

Cro Yes, yes, all's out, I now see the whole affair, my son is either married, or going to be so, to this lady, whom he imposed upon me as his sister Ay, certainly so, and yet I don't find it afflicts me so much as one might think There's the advantage of fretting away our misfortunes beforehand we never feel them when they come

Enter MISS RICHLAND and SIR WILLIAM

Sir Wil But how do you know, madam, that my nephew intends setting off from this place ?

Miss Rich My maid assured me he was come to this inn ; and my own knowledge of his intending to leave the kingdom suggested the rest But what do I see ! my guardian here before us ! Who, my dear sir, could have expected meeting you here ? to what accident do we owe this pleasure ?

Cro To a fool, I believe

Miss Rich But to what purpose did you come ?

Cro To play the fool

Miss Rich But with whom ?

Cro With greater fools than myself

Miss Rich Explain

Cro Why, Mr Honeywood brought me here, to do nothing now I am here , and my son is going to be married to I don't know who, that is here so now you are as wise as I am

Miss Rich Married ! to whom, sir ?

Cro To Olivia, my daughter, as I took her to be , but who the devil she is, or whose daughter she is, I know no more than the man in the moon

Sir Wil Then, sir, I can inform you , and, though a stranger, yet you shall find me a friend to your family It will be enough at present to assure you, that both in point of birth and fortune, the young lady is at least your son's equal Being left by her father, Sir James Woodville—

Cro Sir James Woodville ! What, of the west ?

Sir Wil Being left by him, I say, to the care of a mercenary wretch, whose only aim was to secure her fortune to himself, she was sent to France, under pretence of education , and there every art was tried to fix her for life in a convent, contrary to her inclinations. Of this I was informed upon my arrival at Paris ; and, as I had been once her father's friend, I did all in my power to frustrate her guardian's base intentions. I had even meditated to rescue her from his authority, when your son stepped in with more pleasing violence, gave her liberty, and you a daughter.

Cro But I intend to have a daughter of my own choosing, sir. A young lady, sir, whose fortune, by my interest with those who have interest, will be double what my son has a right to expect. Do you know, Mr. Lofty, sir?

Sir Wil Yes, sir, and know that you are deceived in him. But step this way, and I'll convince you.

[*CROAKER and SIR WILLIAM seem to confer*]

Enter HONEYWOOD

Hon Obstinate man, still to persist in his outrage! Insulted by him, despised by all, I now begin to grow contemptible even to myself. How have I sunk by too great an assiduity to please! How have I overtaxed all my abilities, lest the approbation of a single fool should escape me! But all is now over, I have survived my reputation, my fortune, my friendships, and nothing remains henceforward for me but solitude and repentance.

Miss Rich Is it true, Mr. Honeywood, that you are setting off, without taking leave of your friends? The report is, that you are quitting England. Can it be?

Hon Yes, madam, and though I am so unhappy as to have fallen under your displeasure, yet, thank Heaven, I leave you to happiness, to one who loves you, and deserves your love, to one who has power to procure you affluence, and generosity to improve your enjoyment of it.

Miss Rich And are you sure, sir, that the gentleman you mean is what you describe him?

Hon I have the best assurances of it—his serving me. He does indeed deserve the highest happiness, and that is in your power to confer. As for me, weak and wavering as I have been, obliged by all, and incapable of serving any, what happiness can I find but in solitude? What hope, but in being forgotten?

Miss Rich A thousand! to live among friends that

esteem you, whose happiness it will be to be permitted to oblige you

Hon No, madam, my resolution is fixed Inferiority among strangers is easy, but among those that once were equals, insupportable Nay, to show you how far my resolution can go, I can now speak with calmness of my former follies, my vanity, my dissipation, my weakness I will even confess, that, among the number of my other presumptions, I had the insolence to think of loving you Yes, madam, while I was pleading the passion of another, my heart was tortured with its own But it is over, it was unworthy our friendship, and let it be forgotten

Miss Rich You amaze me !

Hon But you'll forgive it, I know you will, since the confession should not have come from me even now, but to convince you of the sincerity of my intention of—never mentioning it more

[*Going*]

Miss Rich Stay, sir, one moment—Ha ! he here—

Enter LOFTY

Lof Is the coast clear ? None but friends I have followed you here with a trifling piece of intelligence, but it goes no farther, things are not yet ripe for a discovery I have spirits working at a certain board, your affair at the Treasury will be done in less than—a thousand years Mum !

Miss Rich Sooner, sir, I should hope

Lof Why, yes, I believe it may, if it falls into proper hands, that know where to push and where to parry ; that know how the land lies—eh, Honeywood !

Miss Rich It has fallen into yours

Lof Well, to keep you no longer in suspense, your thing is done It is done, I say—that's all I have just had assurances from Lord Neverout, that the claim has been examined, and found admissible *Quietus* is the word, madam

Hon But how ? his lordship has been at Newmarket these ten days.

Lof Indeed ! Then Sir Gilbert Goose must have been most damnably mistaken I had it of him

Miss Rich He ! why Sir Gilbert and his family have been in the country this month

Lof This month ! it must certainly be so—Sir Gilbert's letter did come to me from Newmarket, so that he must have met his lordship there, and so it came about I have his letter about me, I'll read it to you (*Taking out a large bundle*) That's from Paoli of Corsica ; that from the Marquis of Squilachi—Have you a mind to see a letter from Count Poniatowski, now King of Poland ?—Honest Pon—(*Searching*) Oh, sir, what, are you here, too ? I'll tell you what, honest friend, if you have not absolutely delivered my letter to Sir William Honeywood, you may return it The thing will do without him

Sir Wil Sir, I have delivered it, and must inform you, it was received with the most mortifying contempt

Cro Contempt ! Mr Lofty, what can that mean ?

Lof Let him go on, let him go on, I say You'll find it come to something presently

Sir Wil Yes, sir, I believe you'll be amazed, if after waiting some time in the ante-chamber, after being surveyed with insolent curiosity by the passing servants, I was at last assured, that Sir William Honeywood knew no such person, and I must certainly have been imposed upon

Lof Good ! let me die ; very good. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Cro Now, for my life I can't find out half the goodness of it

Lof You can't Ha ! ha !

Cro No, for the soul of me ! I think it was as con-founded a bad answer as ever was sent from one private gentleman to another

Lof And so you can't find out the force of the message ? Why, I was in the house at that very time.

Ha ! ha ! It was I that sent that very answer to my own letter Ha ! ha !

Cro Indeed ! How ? why ?

Lof In one word, things between Sir William and me must be behind the curtain A party has many eyes He sides with Lord Buzzard, I side with Sir Gilbert Goose So that unriddles the mystery

Cro And so it does, indeed, and all my suspicions are over

Lof Your suspicions ! What, then, you have been suspecting, you have been suspecting, have you ? Mr Croaker, you and I were friends, we are friends no longer Never talk to me It's over, I say, it's over

Cro As I hope for your favour I did not mean to offend It escaped me Don't be discomposed

Lof Zounds ! sir, but I am discomposed, and will be discomposed To be treated thus ! Who am I ? Was it for this I have been dreaded both by ins and outs ? Have I been libelled in the *Gazetteer*, and praised in the *St James's* ? Have I been chaired at Wildman's, and a speaker at Merchant Tailors' Hall ? Have I had my hand to addresses, and my head in the print-shops ; and talk to me of suspects ?

Cro My dear sir, be pacified What can you have but asking pardon ?

Lof Sir, I will not be pacified—Suspects ! Who am I ? To be used thus ! Have I paid court to men in favour to serve my friends, the Lords of the Treasury, Sir William Honeywood, and the rest of the gang, and talk to me of suspects ? Who am I, I say, who am I ?

Sir Wil Since, sir, you are so pressing for an answer, I'll tell you who you are A gentleman, as well acquainted with politics as with men in power, as well acquainted with persons of fashion as with modesty, with Lords of the Treasury as with truth, and with all, as you are with Sir William Honeywood. I am Sir William Honeywood

[Discovering his ensigns of the Bath.]

Cro Sir William Honeywood !

Hon Astonishment ! my uncle ! (*Aside*)

Lof So then, my confounded genius has been all this time only leading me up to the garret, in order to fling me out of the window

Cro What, Mr Importance, and are these your works ? Suspect you ! You, who have been dreaded by the ins and outs, you, who have had your hand to addresses, and your head stuck up in print-shops If you were served right, you should have your head stuck up in a pillory

Lof Ay, stick it where you will, for, by the Lord, it cuts but a very poor figure where it sticks at present

Sir Wil Well, Mr Croaker, I hope you now see how incapable this gentleman is of serving you, and how little Miss Richland has to expect from his influence

Cro Ay, sir, too well I see it, and I can't but say I have had some boding of it these ten days So, I'm resolved, since my son has placed his affections on a lady of moderate fortune, to be satisfied with his choice, and not run the hazard of another Mr Lofty in helping him to a better

Sir Wil I approve your resolution ; and here they come to receive a confirmation of your pardon and consent

Enter MRS CROAKER, JARVIS, LEONTINE, and OLIVIA

Mrs Cro Where's my husband ? Come, come, lovey, you must forgive them Jarvis here has been to tell me the whole affair ; and I say, you must forgive them Our own was a stolen match, you know, my dear, and we never had any reason to repent of it

Cro I wish we could both say so However, this gentleman, Sir William Honeywood, has been beforehand with you in obtaining their pardon. So, if the two poor fools have a mind to marry, I think we can tack them together without crossing the Tweed for it.
(*Joining their hands*)

Leon How blest and unexpected ! What, what can we say to such goodness ? But our future obedience shall be the best reply And as for this gentleman, to whom we owe——

Sir Wil Excuse me, sir, if I interrupt your thanks, as I have here an interest that calls me (*Turning to HONEYWOOD*) Yes, sir, you are surprised to see me : and I own that a desire of correcting your follies led me hither I saw with indignation the errors of a mind that only sought applause from others, that easiness of disposition, which, though inclined to the right, had not courage to condemn the wrong I saw with regret those splendid errors, that still took name from some neighbouring duty, your charity, that was but injustice, your benevolence, that was but weakness, and your friendship, but credulity I saw with regret great talents and extensive learning only employed to add sprightliness to error, and increase your perplexities I saw your mind with a thousand natural charms, but the greatness of its beauty served only to heighten my pity for its prostitution

Hon Cease to upbraid me, sir. I have for some time but too strongly felt the justice of your reproaches But there is one way still left me. Yes, sir, I have determined this very hour to quit for ever a place where I have made myself the voluntary slave of all, and to seek among strangers that fortitude which may give strength to the mind, and marshal all its dissipated virtues Yet ere I depart, permit me to solicit favour for this gentleman ; who, notwithstanding what has happened, has laid me under the most signal obligations. Mr Lofty——

Lof Mr Honeywood, I'm resolved upon a reformation as well as you I now begin to find that the man who first invented the art of speaking truth, was a much cunninger fellow than I thought him And to prove that I design to speak truth for the future, I must now assure you, that you owe your late enlargement to

another, as, upon my soul, I had no hand in the matter
So now, if any of the company has a mind for preferment, he may take my place, I'm determined to resign

[Exit

Hon How have I been deceived!

Sir Wil No, sir, you have been obliged to a kinder, fairer friend, for that favour—to Miss Richland. Would she complete our joy, and make the man she has honoured by her friendship happy in her love, I shall then forget all, and be as blest as the welfare of my dearest kinsman can make me

Miss Rich After what is passed it would be but affectation to pretend to indifference. Yes, I will own an attachment, which I find was more than friendship. And if my entreaties cannot alter his resolution to quit the country, I will even try if my hand has not power to detain him. (*Giving her hand*)

Hon Heavens! how can I have deserved all this? How express my happiness, my gratitude? A moment like this overpays an age of apprehensions

Cro Well, now I see content in every face, but Heaven send we be all better this day three months!

Sir Wil Henceforth, nephew, learn to respect yourself. He who seeks only for applause from without, has all his happiness in another's keeping

Hon Yes, sir, I now too plainly perceive my errors, my vanity, in attempting to please all by fearing to offend any, my meanness, in approving folly lest fools should disapprove. Henceforth, therefore, it shall be my study to reserve my pity for real distress, my friendship for true merit, and my love for her, who first taught me what it is to be happy

EPILOGUE

SPOKEN BY MRS BULKLEY

As puffing quacks some catiff wretch procure
To swear the pill, or drop, has wrought a cure ;
Thus, on the stage, our playwrights still depend
For Epilogues and Prologues on some friend,
Who knows each art of coaxing up the town,
And make full many a bitter pill go down
Conscious of this, our bard has gone about,
And teased each rhyming friend to help him out.
An Epilogue, things can't go on without it ;
It could not fail, would you but set about it
Young man, cries one (a bard laid up in clover),
Alas ! young man, my writing days are over ,
Let boys play tricks, and kick the straw, not I ,
Your brother doctor there, perhaps, may try
What I ! dear sir, the doctor interposes ,
What, plant my thistle, sir, among his roses !
No, no, I've other contests to maintain ,
To-night I head our troops at Warwick Lane
Go ask your manager—Who, me ! Your pardon ;
Those things are not our forte at Covent Garden
Our author's friends, thus placed at happy distance,
Give him good words indeed, but no assistance
As some unhappy wight at some new play,
At the pit door stands elbowing away ,
While oft, with many a smile, and many a shrug,
He eyes the centre, where his friends sit snug

His simpering friends, with pleasure in their eyes,
Sink as he sinks, and as he rises rise
He nods, they nod , he cringes, they grimace ,
But not a soul will budge to give him place
Since then, unhelped, our bard must now conform
“ To 'bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,”
Blame where you must, be candid where you can,
And be each critic the *Good-natured Man*

THE END